

Thursday July 23 1998

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Algeria US 2.00	Hong Kong HK 2.50	Pakistan R 2.00
Andorra FF 10	Hungary F 3.00	Poland Z 2.00
Australia AU 5.00	Iceland IS 1.00	Portugal E 2.00
Bahamas BS 0.50	Israel IL 2.00	Romania R 2.00
Belgium BF 70	Italy I 3.50	Saudi Arabia R 10
Belize BZ 1.00	Jordan JO 1.00	Senegal SN 2.00
Canada C 3.00	Kazakhstan KZ 1.00	Slovakia SK 1.00
Cayman Islands KY 1.00	Kenya KE 1.00	Slovenia SI 1.00
Czech Republic CZ 1.00	Latvia LV 1.00	South Africa ZA 1.00
Denmark DK 1.00	Lithuania LT 1.00	Spain P 2.00
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Roy Hattersley

Listening is for losers

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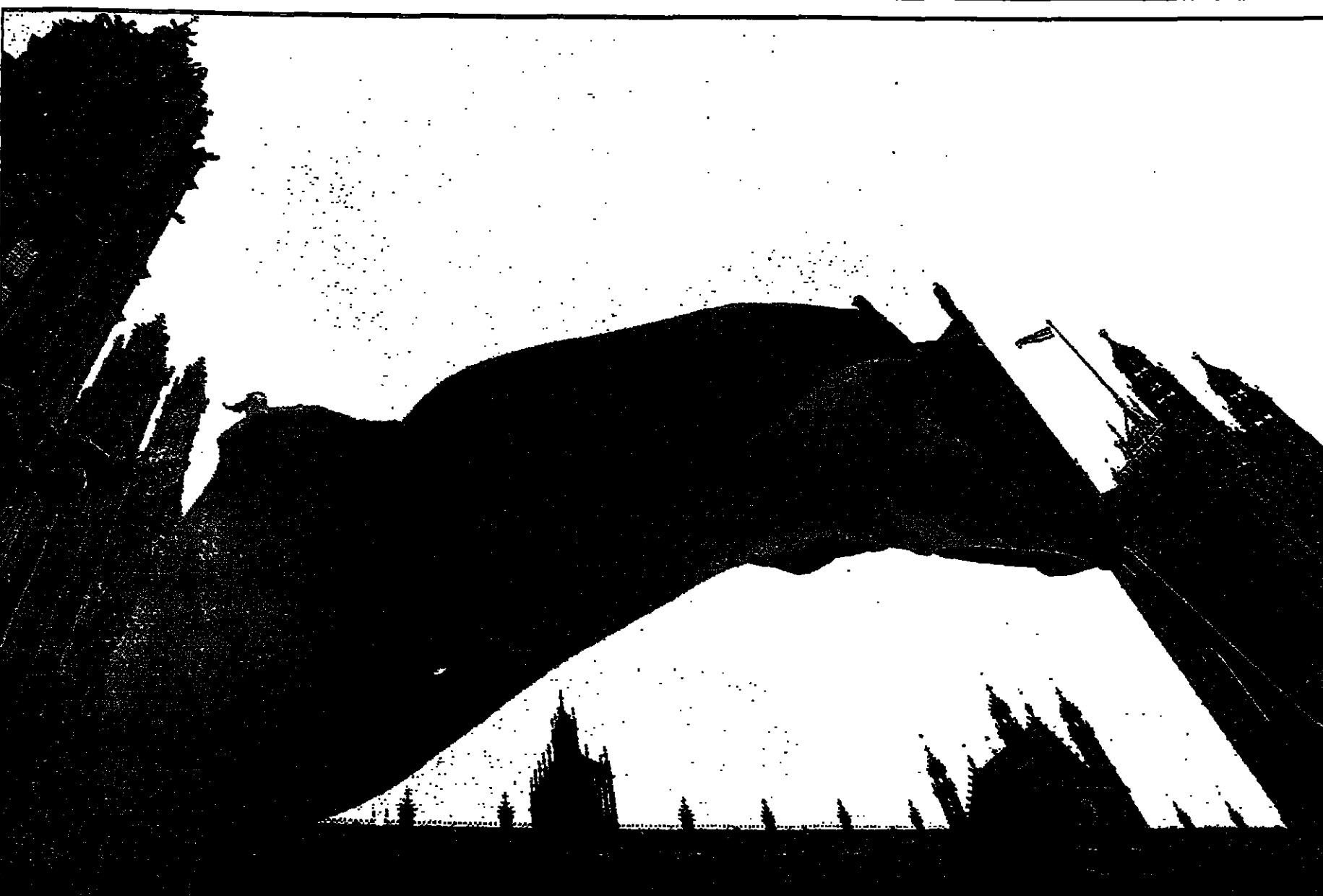


OnLine

Wall Street's dash for cash

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Pink protest



Flags of gay rights activists who held a vigil outside Parliament during yesterday's Lords debate on the age of consent for homosexuals

PHOTOGRAPH: KIERAN DOHERTY

Crisis over gay vote

Peers defy MPs on age of consent

Lucy Ward
Political correspondent

A REDUCTION in the gay age of consent was blocked in the House of Lords last night as peers provoked a constitutional storm by voting to overturn the huge Commons majority.

After a passionate debate the amendment to equalise the gay and heterosexual age of consent at 16 was defeated by 168 votes — 290 to 122.

A packed chamber heard vehement opposition to the government proposal, risking a constitutional confrontation

in sending the bill back to the Commons yet again.

Home secretary Jack Straw has kept open the option of postponing the change, deciding whether to stand firm against the upper chamber or back down and reintroduce the move in separate legislation in the next parliamentary session.

The former prime minister, Baroness Thatcher, made a rare appearance, and speakers opposing the change included bishops — backing the stance of the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr George Carey — and the former Chief Rabbi, Lord Jakobovits.

Gay rights campaigners gathered outside Parliament — where extra police were on

duty — for a vigil during the debate. Some chained themselves to railings, and were freed by police with boltcutters. The protesters called on peers to support the will of the Commons, which last month agreed to equalise the age of consent by a majority of 207 on a free vote.

Ministers are anxious to avoid a new "ping-pong" battle between the Lords and Commons over the flagship Crime and Disorder Bill, which contains measures to fulfil Labour's manifesto pledge to speed up the youth justice system.

It emerged on Tuesday that Mr Straw was prepared to drop the age of consent amendment, tabled by the Labour backbencher Ann Keen, rather than see the bill fail because the Lord and Commons could not agree it before the summer recess.

Home Office minister Alan Michael yesterday said the Government would have to consider the Lords' decision.



He warned that "to delay the Crime and Disorder Bill would create enormous problems and it would delay things like the Sexual Offences Act which is meant to protect children, as well as many aspects which are meant to nip offending in the

bud with young offenders."

The call to overturn the age of consent amendment was led by the Tory peer, Baroness Young. She said churches, Muslim groups and members of the public who had "deluged" her with letters backed her call. She told peers that too little parliamentary time had been given to discussion of the reform, which was introduced only on the third reading of the bill after a three-hour Commons debate.

"There has been no opportunity at all for detailed consideration of this change in the law and all the issues," said Lady Young. The reform could prove merely the "thin end of the wedge" leading to a further lowering of the age of consent to 14 and possibly to gay marriage.

Peers speaking in favour of lowering the age of consent were in a clear minority. Labour's Baroness Mallett, QC, said the change would protect young men because they would no longer be

driven into secrecy and isolation.

A further key concern was the need to protect vulnerable young people if the age of consent was reduced. The Government is committed to protecting teenagers from abuse by predatory adults in positions of authority, and has set up a working party due to report by the end of the year.

Lady Young argued the Government had accepted the change while acknowledging — by promising to act to help young people at risk — that the move was "seriously flawed". "I ask myself as a simple person how can they let it go forward on to the statute book in this unsatisfactory state?"

The Government should take back the amendment, and bring forward its own bill reducing the age of consent in the next parliamentary session, she said.

Gay row, page 4; Jonathan Keene, page 8

Sales halved as ardour cools in Viagra love affair

Patients over-estimated sexual appetite, say US doctors

Joanna Coles in New York

A MERICA'S new gold rush is over. Prescriptions for the male impotence drug Viagra have fallen by almost half since a peak in May of 303,421 a week, with doctors saying many patients do not actually want as much sex as they had imagined.

"The euphoria is probably gone," said Steve List, an analyst with Mehta Partners, a New York investment firm.

"Many people are having less sex than they had anticipated," agreed Dr J. Francois Eid, the director of the New York Presbyterian Impotency Centre.

The drop is due in part to the refusal of some medical insurance companies to pay for the drug, but doctors also believe that patients are rationing the little blue pills,

which cost \$10 (£5) each, and are treating themselves to sex less often than expected.

Some psychologists have suggested that the reintroduction of sex into a relationship where the partners have grown accustomed to celibacy may be disruptive.

According to Dr Eid, there is evidence to suggest that some people are using the drug incorrectly and then giving up on it in the belief that it is not working for them. For Viagra to be effective it should be taken an hour before sex. It will not work if there is no sexual stimulus.

"It can take half a dozen tries before everything goes perfectly," said Dr Eid. "Some will give up after one or two attempts."

On its launch in April, Viagra broke all records for a new drug as nearly 200,000 prescriptions were written in the first week. Urologists reported record attendances at clinics and many, overwhelmed by demand, had to have special Viagra stamps made to hasten the prescription process.

Although sales last week dropped to 184,313, they remain exceptional for a new drug and

are expected to top \$1 billion by the end of the year.

Viagra has suffered adverse publicity with the death of several patients. The US Food and Drug Administration confirmed last night that 38 Viagra users had died and said it was investigating another 38 fatalities. Manufacturer Pfizer pointed out that many of those patients were elderly and already unwell.

Alternative impotence treatments which are more frequently covered by insurance policies have recovered some of their market share.

"This is something we ob-

serve with every product used to treat erectile dysfunction," said Dr Eid. "There's always an initial, pent-up need for a new product, and everybody wants to try it."

Myron Holubak, the general manager of the Plymouth Group, the consulting arm of IMS Health, agreed. He said the best indicator of Viagra's future potential was the refill rate, which had climbed steadily before a slight drop in the latest figures.

"As long as people keep refilling their prescriptions, Viagra probably will reach \$1 billion," he said.

PCC clears newspapers that paid criminals

Roy Greenslade

IN A landmark decision, the Press Complaints Commission yesterday rejected complaints against four newspapers for paying convicted criminals to serialise their memoirs. The PCC argued that there was sufficient public interest to warrant publication.

It upheld the right of the Times to serialise the controversial book by Gitta Sereny about Mary Bell, the Daily Telegraph for serialising a book by IRA informer Sean O'Callaghan, and the Mirror and the Express for their exclusive interviews with nurses Deborah Parry and Lucille McLauchlan.

Its detailed eight-page adjudication on the three cases was based on a strict interpretation of the editors' code of conduct which outlaws payments to convicted criminals unless justified in the public interest.

"It is wrong to glorify crime," noted the PCC, but "not necessarily to write about it. There will be occasions on which the public has a right to know about events relating to a crime or criminals. The key to the code is, therefore, public interest."

This argument was reinforced by Lord Wakeham, the PCC's chairman, who said yesterday: "All along we saw that our task lay in making an objective judgment based on the wording of the code rather than in making a moral judgment."

In a separate adjudication, the Home Office last night censured its civil servants for failing to tell ministers about the impending publication of the Bell book.

Bell, jailed in 1968 for killing two little boys, was the highest-profile case before the PCC. When the Times paid to serialise Cries Unheard by Gitta Sereny in April, there was a public outcry. The

boys' relatives held public protests.

More than 100 complaints were sent to the PCC but it agreed with the Times that it was of overriding public importance to be able to read about Bell's early life and the possible reasons for her having committed her crimes.

Bell, who had been living under an assumed name for years in a secret location, was swiftly hunted down by reporters. She had to be taken into protective custody by police and was forced to reveal to her own 14-year-old daughter her awful secrets.

No complaint was made against the press's behaviour, but the PCC devotes several paragraphs to condemning papers for harassment of Bell.

In the cases of the nurses Parry and McLauchlan, who were jailed for the murder of colleague Yvonne Gilford in Saudi Arabia, the PCC decided there was sufficient evidence of a miscarriage of justice to warrant papers paying for their stories.

It similarly felt that the Telegraph was right to publish the memoirs of former IRA informer, Sean O'Callaghan, in spite of two convictions for murder, because he was shedding light on the workings of a secret terrorist organisation responsible for killing hundreds of people.

In its conclusion, the PCC said that in no case had there been a breach of the editors' code. "These were all matters on which the public had a right to know and about which wide debate was legitimate. Furthermore, payment [was] in all probability 'necessary' ... to secure the material."

It understands that some people may find all such payments "extremely offensive" but this moral argument "goes beyond the scope of the turn to page 8, column 1

The Verdict, G2 cover story

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Anna Murdoch, and Rupert at home in Australia. 'She can cut me off at the knees better than anyone else.' Though widely regarded as a substantial power within the Murdoch empire, Mrs Murdoch has always played down her role

Divorce sets up battle for Murdoch billions

After 31 years of apparently happy marriage, Anna Murdoch has launched what may prove to be the costliest break-up of all time

Lisa Buckingham, Julia Finch and Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

ANNA MURDOCH, the wife of the world's most powerful media mogul, yesterday filed for divorce in what is likely to be the costliest marriage break-up of all time.

A Roman Catholic who was always thought unlikely to seek a divorce, the mother-of-three has chosen to file her suit in California, where she could get half Rupert Murdoch's share in the \$30 billion News Corporation empire.

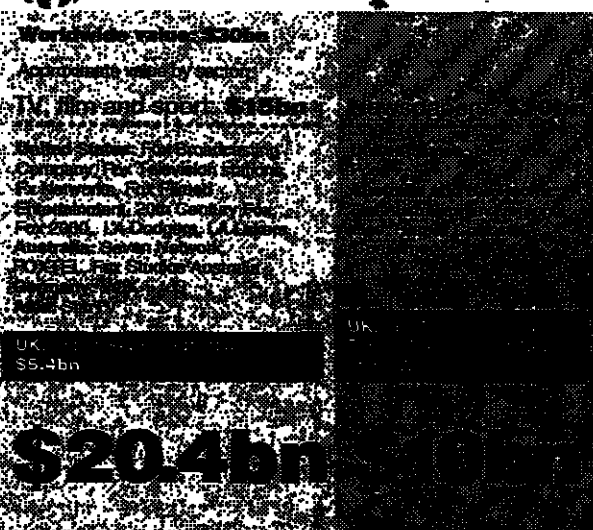
The petition was filed in the Los Angeles Superior Court by Mrs Murdoch's lawyer Daniel Jaffe, a high-powered Beverly Hills attorney. He declined to comment on the case, but the wording on the petition hinted at a long legal ordeal for Mr Murdoch.

It stated that Anna Murdoch does not know the exact extent of her husband's multi-billion dollar fortune, but intends to find out. The petition said Mrs Murdoch is unaware of the full nature of the assets and obligations... and will amend this petition after discovery or at trial.

Mr Jaffe will now press Mr Murdoch to reveal his vast portfolio of assets, which could take years.

Mr Murdoch once said of his wife: 'She can cut me off at the knees better than anyone else.'

News Corporation



Mrs Murdoch stands to get half of all the Murdoch possessions. Apart from a luxury yacht, fleet of cars and one third of News Corp, the couple own several homes around the world. They include a \$4 million Penthouse apartment in London's St James's, overlooking Green Park, and a \$5 million house on the Upper East Side in New York.

There is also a sprawling \$15 million Spanish-style villa in Beverly Hills, complete with 10-car garage, a harbour-view penthouse in Sydney worth \$5 million, a mansion in Melbourne worth another \$5 million, a vast ranch and a \$20 million home in Aspen, Colorado, complete with trout stream running through the living room.

Mrs Murdoch, a 53-year-old novelist, has been a main board director of her husband's media empire since 1990 and was his sheet anchor in moments of crisis, such as his near bankruptcy in the early 1990s.

Though widely regarded as a substantial power within the Murdoch empire, Mrs Murdoch has always played down her role. She has said that if she had any real influ-

ence in Australia and the US. Although Mrs Murdoch's petition suggests she is unaware of the full extent of his wealth, she may have an insight into the tortuously complex offshore tax avoidance strategy which has been one of the hallmarks of News Corp's financial success for years. There are subsidiaries in territories as far flung as the Netherlands Antilles, the Cayman Islands and Bermuda, which act as convenient cogs in his financial machine.

The impending divorce, which comes after 31 years of apparently contented family life, throws a new cloud over who will stand by her man, old Mr Murdoch at the helm of the dynastic business.

Although there are outside shareholders in News Corp, Mr Murdoch has made sure that his family retains control of the business, even though they nominally own only about 30 per cent of the shares.

Several longstanding and highly regarded Murdoch lieutenants, such as BSkyB's Sam Chisholm, have quit recently, reportedly in protest at the power Murdoch has given to his offspring — 30-year-old Elisabeth, director of programmes at BSkyB in London; Lachlan, 26, who now heads his father's Australian business interests; and James, 28, who runs News Corp's music and internet offshoot in New York.

It has often been suggested that should Mr Murdoch be forced to step aside through illness or old age, Anna would step in as interim chairman while it was decided which of their children would eventually take the helm. The divorce petition has wrecked that plan.

Mrs Murdoch met her husband-to-be when she was aged 17 and a trainee gossip columnist on one of Murdoch's Sydney papers. Sent to interview the 30-year-old Murdoch, who was separated from his first wife, they immediately became a couple.

'He was like a whirlwind coming into the room' she said of that first meeting. By 22 she was married and had

given up work, as she does not believe it is possible for a marriage to support two strong careers.

Born Anna Torv in 1944 to a Scottish mother and Estonian father who ran a dry cleaning shop in Kirkcaldy, she emigrated with her family to Australia aged nine.

When their separation was announced in April there was no reason to doubt her claim that she was trying to jolt him into slowing down at work. His father, founder of the News Corp empire, died of a heart attack at 67 — Mr Murdoch's age. Close aides then suggested the split was no more than a tiff and Mrs Murdoch would stand by her man so long as he heeded her warning about overwork. But her decision to demand a div-

orce from the man who swept her off her feet suggests that their differences may run deeper.

She has admitted taking up writing to 'fill in the loneliness' of his absence and spent nine years studying literature and mythology as a mature student to replace the hours she used to spend looking after her children. Her books are published by HarperCollins, one of her husband's companies. She has lived with the pressure of being Mrs Murdoch all her married life. In the early years, Muriel McKay, the wife of News of the World chairman Ken McKay, was kidnapped and murdered. It later emerged that the kidnappers had mistaken Mrs McKay for Anna Murdoch.

Splitting the difference

- The biggest pre-Murdoch divorce settlement was agreed by US billionaire businessman Jack King. His wife, a British-born former topless model got \$300 million, plus properties worth \$47 million in 1990
- Film director Steven Spielberg handed \$73 million to his actress wife Amy Irving after their three-year marriage ended in 1989
- The Aga Khan handed over \$50 million when he divorced Begum Aga Khan
- Last year Gary Wendt, boss of the giant US GE Capital Corporation had to hand over \$20 million to his wife Laura in recognition of her years spent as a 'corporate wife'
- The UK restaurateur Sir Terence Conran was ordered by a judge to pay his ex-wife Lady Caroline £10.5 million.
- Donald and Ivana Trump divorced in 1991 after 14 years of marriage. The US property tycoon had to pay her \$14 million, plus \$350,000 a year for his children's expenses and provide a \$4 million housing allowance.

PCC clears papers that paid criminals

continued from page 1

commissioner'. The PCC also notes that British law, which already prohibits people from profiting from their crimes, sets a six-year time limit. To extend this indefinitely would restrict people's right to free speech, it warned that this may well conflict with the European Convention on Human Rights once it is enshrined into UK law.

Alan Travis writes: Civil servants were last night cen-

sured for failing to tell Home Office ministers for nearly seven weeks that the book involving Mary Bell was about to be published.

Home Secretary Jack Straw faced embarrassment when he learned the truth some days after the Guardian disclosed that Bell was to earn tens of thousands of pounds as a result of the biography.

Mr Straw is now also considering ways of strengthening the law to prevent con-

victed criminals from making money from memoirs.

Officials are to be given new guidelines telling them they must keep ministers informed about cases 'which are likely to arouse controversy and provoke concern over the adequacy of the law' even if they have no statutory power to intervene.

The action follows an official inquiry into the Bell case by the Home Office's permanent secretary, David Omand,

which found that civil servants were told by the probation service as early as March 6 this year that her book would appear shortly and was likely to arouse controversy. They delayed telling ministers until it was too late.

The inquiry found that Bell had frequently been the subject of attempts by newspapers and literary agents to persuade her to sell her story for substantial sums even before she left prison.

The PCC's landmark decision has shown that it is living in the real world. It is hand in hand with the law, which doesn't prohibit convicted people from earning money by writing about their crimes after a six month period.

Roy Greenslade on the PCC's adjudication

G2, cover story

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Above, the room after the makeover which reduced Susan Dukes (centre) to tears. Right, the room in its original state



Room makeover for TV programme ends in tears

Amelia Gentleman

THE beginnings of a beautiful neighbourhood feud have been caught on camera, as a decoration makeover for the BBC's Changing Rooms series went wrong.

The show, which gets neighbours to redecorate a room in each other's homes, is fraught with potential

conflict. But its producers were unprepared for Susan and Russell Dukes's reaction to the changes.

Mrs Dukes screamed and cried in the garden when she saw her "new" dining room.

Neighbours Phil and Caroline Cockin had worked with designer Laurence Llewellyn-Bowen to transform the Dukes's new extension into what they

hoped was an 18th-century Queen Anne-style dining room. When she recovered, Mrs Dukes described it as "a nasty mess".

She said: "I couldn't put into words how much I hated it. It looked like a cheap set for some kind of murder mystery weekend."

Executive producer Linda Clifford said the presenter, Carol Sumell, was so taken aback by their reaction

that she started shaking. "It was an awful moment. Susan's eyes filled up with tears; she was really upset. No one has ever been so horrified on the programme before — we had to cut out the bits with her crying," Ms Clifford said.

The Dukes had wanted to create a glamorous but traditional atmosphere in the dining room of their house near Hull. Instead, their neighbours decorated the walls in plum, and painted black and white squares on the concrete floor. Candle sticks were stuck to the walls with Blu-Tack and a mock fireplace was stuck on the back of the door.

As soon as the production team left, Mrs Dukes spent hours trying to restore the room to something like its previous state. The BBC has a policy of not paying for or helping with alterations if participants are unhappy.

She told the Cockins she loathed what they had done, adding: "We thought we would get a house we were proud of, not one I'm ashamed to show friends."

Ms Clifford said everyone on the programme, to be broadcast next Thursday, had been disappointed by the Dukes's response. But she added that the Dukes's compelling television.

Mice offer new uses for cloning

Tim Radford
Science Editor

HAWAIIAN scientists have followed Dolly the cloned sheep with replica mice. And in a world first, they cloned more mice from the first clones.

Their work means that researchers can use clones to study what happens in cancer, AIDS, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and ageing. It could also lead to new ways of "copying" the best farm animals.

The Hawaiian team is to collaborate with PPL Therapeutics at Roslin near Edinburgh — the company which uses genetically engineered sheep to make vital human proteins — it was announced last night.

The research, published today in Nature, opens the way for much faster research experiments because mice breed quicker than sheep.

Ryuzo Yanagimachi of the University of Hawaii and colleagues created 50 identical mice. They took the DNA from the cell of a female adult and injected it into an egg from which the DNA had been removed. They popped the artificially fertilised egg into a surrogate mother and produced the first clone. They went on to make second and third generations of cloned mice, some of which have been mated and have raised normal offspring.

The achievement puts a stop to speculation about Dolly, the sheep that shook the world. Humans have been cloning plants for generations and animals for almost a decade. Dolly was the first creature cloned from an adult: a "carbon copy" generated from one cell from the mammary gland of a six-year-old

Finn Dorset ewe at the Roslin Institute. This, until March 1997, was believed impossible. Embryo cells can be divided to make twins. But embryo cells soon differentiate into skin, bone, blood, nerve tissue and so on: after that, the argument went, the clock could not be turned back.

But it was turned back: the Roslin researchers persuaded a six-year-old adult cell to "reset" its clock and become the nucleus of an identical infant. The announcement caused a worldwide storm, and raised the spectre of cloned humans. But late last year, researchers speculated that the Roslin team might have been misled that Dolly's parent had been pregnant at the time and that, against huge odds, the researchers had used a foetal cell which had made its way into the sheep's udder.

But the two Hawaiian reports show that cloning from adult cells can be done. And two more reports in Nature today put an end to the matter. A team which included Sir Alec Jeffreys, founder of genetic fingerprinting, reports that Dolly was "beyond reasonable doubt" what her makers said she was.

And a team from Roslin, led by Ian Wilmut, the scientist who presented Dolly, announced that a different technique showed the same result.

"We've always been certain that Dolly was derived from an adult cell," said Harry Griffin, of the Roslin Institute. From now on, researchers can clone with laboratory mice. Dr Griffin said: "Mice have a short generation time, they are easy to work with, they are much cheaper to work with, you can keep them in very controlled conditions, they are not seasonal breeders like sheep are."

Master designer unleashes classic turn of modernity

Susanah Frankel
in Paris

THE haute couture collections ended on a high yesterday with a stunning ovation for the undisputed master of French fashion, Yves Saint Laurent.

At the end of this year Saint Laurent plans to retire from ready-to-wear fashion to concentrate on haute couture.

The Moroccan designer, Alber Elbaz, now at Guy Laroche, has been appointed to take over.

Rumour is rife, however, that Saint Laurent also plans to hand over the couture before long. Jean Paul Gaultier is the designer mooted to inherit the most influential couture house of them all. Whatever Saint Laurent decides, this latest offering once again cemented his reputation as the most important designer of the latter part of the 20th century.

Only one play, however, much new, immaculate Le Smoking suits rubbed shoulders with a procession of little black dresses, knee or ankle length in velvet or crepe.

Using a muted palette, Yves Saint Laurent's use of colour — a chartreuse sash on a long black gown, a sequence of chiffon in varying shades of brightest blue — remains unsurpassed.

Thierry Mugler's show had his signature style injecting a hefty dose of high



A model in wool overcoat in Yves Saint Laurent's show yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: MICHEL ELIE

camp glamour. Models, including Jerry Hall and daughter, Elizabeth Jagger, in matching outfits (mother's long and enveloping, daughter's short and revealing) strutted down the catwalk in everything from spiky pinstripe hotpants and thigh-high boots to

a giant silk puffed jacket studded with rhinestones. But where Saint Laurent's trademark still seemed entirely relevant to the modern woman, Mugler's high-gloss overt take on glamour seemed dated veering perilously close to drag. The designer did, however, score

the ultimate celebrity model appearance.

Cyd Charisse looked the proverbial million dollars sashaying down in a black silk trench coat flashing her famous legs — encrusted with emeralds — and all to the delight of the straining

Prescott fights to prevent the closure of Sellafield

Paul Brown
Environment Correspondent

JOHN Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, is fighting a rearguard action last night to prevent the forced closure of the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant in Cumbria.

Ministers from 15 countries meeting in Stresa, Portugal, are trying to reach a binding agreement to cut all forms of pollution into the north-east Atlantic.

Mr Prescott said yesterday that he was proud that Britain "had transformed its image as the dirty man of Europe, a fundamental change from the last government", but conceded that negotiations were difficult on the issue of radioactivity.

He refused to accept that the negotiations were about closing individual plants and might mean the end of the two Cumbrian reprocessing works, which employ 8,000 people.

"This is not about shutting Sellafield," he said. "It is about discharges to as low as technically possible," he said. "I am not talking to you about dates for closure, 2020 or any others that have been mentioned, we are still in the middle of negotiations."

But Svend Auken, the Danish environment minister, described Britain as standing alone against 14 nations in Europe in refusing to accept near zero discharges of radioactivity.

Mr Auken, Britain's sternest critic at the talks, wants progressive reductions in discharges and complete closure of Sellafield by 2020.

He said the Nordic nations were particularly badly affected by Sellafield because

the discharges migrate north, affect the North Sea, the north-east Atlantic and the Arctic.

His country represented Greenland where much of the radioactivity could be found. It was also the biggest political issue in Iceland, he said.

All 15 countries present, including Britain, had accepted the phasing out of dangerous chemicals, he said.

"The UK has accepted the argument on chemicals but is asking us to treat radioactivity differently than chemicals, yet we know that it does people harm. We cannot make a special case."

Mr Prescott said the issue of pipeline discharges was difficult.

The French had made a political decision to accept near zero discharges where technically possible. That was now one of six versions in the negotiations.

"I sincerely hope that some time in the night or by this time tomorrow we will have a deal we can all sign," he said. British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) is at the talks lobbying on behalf of the nuclear industry. Bill Anderson, for the company, said it could not achieve near zero discharges for closure, 2020 or any others that have been mentioned, we are still in the middle of negotiations.

Other issues still being debated include the disposal of oil rigs. Britain has a radically changed position in accepting that all 126 of the giant steel rigs in the North Sea should be scrapped on land. Although this was widely welcomed there is still the contentious issue of oil rig footings — the bottom 20 per cent of the structure that rests on the sea floor.

Glasgow street kids catapulted to fame by lethal weapon invention

Martin Walmsley

ALERT combination of Hooke's Law of Elasticity, condoms and sawn-off plastic bottles catapulted Glasgow street kids into British medical history.

Ingenious misuse of the Blue Peter principle — that anything from a toothbrush to a spaceship can be made from recycled household goods — has created a lethal new weapon: the Johnny-popper.

Made from condoms — or in multi-pellet versions, rubber gloves — the home-made catapult reverses the usual, progress-obstructing principle of the protective sheath.

Its missiles can travel at up to 128mph, according to eye specialist Kerr MacAndie, who discovered the Johnny-popper trend after questioning young eye-injury victims at Glasgow Southern General Hospital.

Serious catapult damage, including blurred vision, a cataract removed and a lens transplant are documented by Dr MacAndie in the British Journal of Ophthalmology, which also reports his joint medico-physical reconstruction of a Johnny-popper.

Assisted by a nine-year-old boy, who was treated for vision problems after

being hit by a Johnny-popper slug, he made and tested condom and glove versions of the device.

"We were very surprised by the velocity with which the device fired its pellets," he says. His colleagues in the hospital physics department provide illustrative trajectories and speed graphs.

Johnny-popper missiles outpaced smaller-bore air-gun pellets and conformed to Robert Hooke's 1681 Law of Elasticity in Solid Bodies, which first drew scientific attention to the extreme power of string under tension.

"These catapults are the 1990s version of the peashooter to children, but they are also lethal weapons," says Dr MacAndie. "The Johnny-popper's popularity is due to a combination of ease of construction and use, portability, potential for playful mischief and ease of concealment in the classroom."

But children probably don't realise the harm they can do with one. To them it is just a laugh.

Johnny-poppers are made by Dr MacAndie in the British Journal of Ophthalmology, which also reports his joint medico-physical reconstruction of a Johnny-popper.

Gays row leaves Lambeth Conference in disarray

Madeleine Bunting
Religious Affairs Editor

HOPES of preventing the issue of homosexuality splitting the Lambeth Conference of 735 Anglican bishops, meeting in Canterbury, were in tatters yesterday after an alliance of African and evangelical bishops forced organisers to cancel a presentation by lesbian and gay Christians.

In a heated closed meeting on Tuesday night, the head of the section considering human sexuality, the Rt Rev Duncan Buchanan of Johannesburg was said to be "traumatised" and "shellshocked" by the "ferocity of the feelings" expressed in an opening debate on the subject. Homosexuality was likened to bestiality and child abuse.

A presentation led by the Rev Colin Coward, a gay London priest, and 20 lesbian and gay ordained and lay Christians was to have been made in the section's second meeting today, but opponents of further liberalisation voted by a two-thirds majority to cancel the 50-minute session arranged by the Archbishop of Cape Town, the Most Rev Njongonkulu Ndungane.

"One African bishop said if we are going to talk to lesbians and gays, why don't we discuss bestiality and child abuse," said one of the section participants, the veteran gay rights campaigner, the Rt Rev Jack

Spong, Bishop of Newark, New Jersey. "The Third World bishops combined with the evangelical bishops could pass a negative resolution on homosexuality. There is a huge gap between bishops on this question. It was a very discouraging meeting. People felt it was impossible to bridge this enormous chasm," added Bishop Spong, who claims the backing of 88 bishops for a resolution supportive of the recognising homosexual rights in the Anglican Communion.

Mr Coward, of the gay and lesbian organisation, Changing Attitudes, remains hopeful that the presentation may take place next week. He had arranged for seven gays and lesbians to describe their experiences as Christians as well as a question and answer session.

He said: "Everyone knows there are strong divergent views but no one expected the group to rent itself apart so suddenly and so quickly. Bishop Buchanan was shellshocked by the ferocity of the feelings and traumatised."

Bishops were to have been told in the presentation that "gay, lesbian and bisexual people are called by God to express their sexuality in loving, faithful and committed relationships" and that "same-sex orientation is a God-given reality for a large minority of people, not a sin or a sickness."

Bishops were to be told to stop colluding in discrimination of gays and lesbians, and

that they had to re-evaluate

Richard Kierke, of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, claimed the latent and virulent homophobia in the Anglican Church had erupted today. These men have chosen not to listen. They are incapable of even meeting us halfway," he said.

Lesbian and gay campaigners are concerned that there has been a concerted attempt by opponents of homosexual rights to get a majority in this crucial section of 50 bishops to put the brakes on any initiative by the liberal wing. They are planning to highlight the issue today by wearing rainbow ribbon badges.

Many African bishops are dismissive of homosexuality, an issue which they consider trivial compared with international debt and relations with Islam. Conservative evangelicals from the US, Australia, Asia and England insist that the Bible forbids homosexuality.

Months of careful negotiation to secure a compromise that the issue should be referred to an international commission is now in danger of collapse.

But the Most Rev Richard Holloway, the Bishop of Edinburgh, a lesbian and gay rights campaigner who will host a reception for the Lesbian and Gay Christian movement, was optimistic that the Anglican tradition of agreeing to disagree would prevail.

Sarah Hall

THE businessman Asil Nadir consumed champagne and caviar during his flight from British justice, the Old Bailey heard yesterday.

The details of Nadir's celebratory escape emerged during the trial of Peter Dimond, the pilot who allegedly helped the 57-year-old tycoon breach his bail terms and evade a trial for theft and false accounting by flying him out of British jurisdiction.

Dimond, aged 56, of Petersfield, Hampshire, denies tending and intending to pervert the course of justice between January and May 1993.

The court heard that Nadir, former head of the Polly Peck business conglomerate, celebrated in Vienna after fleeing Britain, where he faced criminal charges in May 1993.

As his private jet refuelled, he took refreshments — not lukewarm coffee and biscuits, but champagne and caviar, for no doubt this was, for Asil Nadir, the time for celebration," said Julian Bevan, QC, prosecuting.

When the jet landed at Istanbul, en route to the entrepreneur's final destination of northern Cyprus, the celebrations continued.

"There was a welcoming party and more celebrations on and off the plane. It all has the hallmarks of a triumphal flight home," Mr Bevan said.

Champagne and caviar on Nadir's fugitive flight

Dimond viewed Nadir as a man "degraded to the point of desperation" who needed a break to put his case together, the court was told.

But "he knew full well that Asil Nadir's bail conditions prohibited him from leaving this country and going beyond these shores, out of jurisdiction," Mr Bevan said.

The court heard that Dimond — who bought and sold airplanes and was "well connected in the world of flying" — arranged for Nadir to take

"There was a was a welcoming party and more celebrations on and off the plane"

a small, twin-engine plane at Compton Abbas, Dorset. A businessman, sporting dark glasses and a hat, went unrecognised as he and Dimond boarded the craft bound for Beauvais, near Paris.

At Beauvais, they took a second jet, via Vienna and Istanbul, to northern Cyprus, where Nadir remains.

Dimond — who said he believed Nadir would return to Britain to face trial — allegedly realised he would face trouble if he returned.

"He would certainly have not received the same wel-

come Asil Nadir received having arrived in north Cyprus," Mr Bevan said.

He subsequently opted to stay there for the next five years, leaving in January this year. He was arrested in Haverfordwest, west Wales, where he allegedly told officers: "I am the person who flew Asil Nadir out of the country. I have no regrets for doing this."

The court heard that Dimond had met Nadir through his wife in the mid-1970s, and agreed to help him after attending a jewellery sale party in 1983 "during which Nadir explained his plight".

The entrepreneur claimed he could not get his defence prepared as papers were removed from his home or office, and spoke of people being bribed.

Dimond "saw Nadir as a man who had been unfairly treated, a shadow of his former self who walked with a stick and had a grey pallor," Mr Bevan said.

Dimond allegedly told officers: "I am a reasonable, fair-minded person. I felt he was not getting the opportunity to present a defence."

"I know in my own life, if that happened to me, I would want to back off and go somewhere where I could have peace and quiet and put my house in order."

"This man needed time and a break... I felt he deserved that time."

The trial continues.

A sniper's bullet, poisoned tea... Richard Norton-Taylor reports on 'low methods' devised by secret agents to shorten the war

Britain's plan to kill Hitler revealed

PRIME MINISTER.

I received a letter from S.O.E. this morning telling me that they had had information from a source of a project to kill Hitler, and asking whether the Chiefs of Staff agreed in principle to his immediate execution. The Chiefs of Staff were unanimous that, from the strictly military point of view, it was almost an advantage that Hitler should remain in control of German strategy, having regard to the blunders that he has made, but that on the wider point of view, the sooner he was got out of the way the better.

2. Since then the telegram at Flag "A" has been received from Ambassador Duff Cooper. I am told that, with your approval, the Foreign Secretary is instructing him to go ahead.

BRITISH secret agents plotted to assassinate Hitler during the final months of the second world war after gathering extraordinarily detailed intelligence about his personal habits and the layout of his Alpine retreat, documents made public today reveal.

They show that agents of the Special Operations Executive, set up to work undercover behind enemy lines, drew up elaborate plans — codenamed Foxley — to kill Hitler by a sniper's shot at the retreat, an attack on his special train, or poisoning his tea.

The plot is disclosed in hundreds of hitherto secret documents about SOE activities released at the Public Record Office. Three files on SOE operations in the Irish Republic are conspicuously absent.

Among potential assassins considered by SOE were foreign workers employed at Hitler's retreat at Berchtesgarden in the Bavarian Alps. One SOE officer even contemplated hypnotising Rudolf Hess into carrying out the job. Hess, Hitler's former deputy, flew to Britain in 1941 in an apparent attempt to persuade Britain to make peace with Germany.

The seeds of the plan to liquidate Hitler were sown by Anthony Eden, the foreign secretary — were sown by a French colonel, who discovered in June 1944 that Hitler was staying in a chateau near Perpignan in south-west France. He suggested to SOE staff working with Free French forces in Algeria that the allies should bomb the chateau. Though that opportunity was missed, SOE agents in Algiers urged London to take up the idea.

General Sir Hastings Ismay, secretary to the war cabinet, told Churchill that the chiefs of staff were unanimous "that, from the strictly military point of view, it was almost an advantage that Hitler should remain in control of German strategy, having regard to the blunders that he has made, but that on the wider point of view, the sooner he was got out of the way the better".

After speaking to C — the Chief of MI6, Sir Stewart Menzies — about the assassination plot, Major General



Hitler at Berchtesgarden, and (above left) a secret memo to Churchill from General Sir Hastings Ismay about the plot

Roulette with a difference and brothels on the fjords

ORGIES in which naked girls on white horses gave "spirited renderings" of Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*, and "floating brothels" on Norwegian fjords featured in a black propaganda campaign by British agents — based not entirely on their imagination.

SOE officers used known sexual peccadilloes to paint a picture of a decadent Nazi leadership to undermine its authority and the morale of German soldiers.

SOE picked out Christian Weber, the Munich Nazi Party chief, who was, it said, well known for his orgies. "A particular attraction at this time was a large roulette wheel on which a naked girl had been strapped."

A Wehrmacht soldier was alleged to have reported how Weber, "drunk as usual, was acting as croupier and set the table in motion. The audience of mainly SS men sat ready round the table. The gentleman opposite the girl when the wheel stops then obliges."

SOE reported "a good time was had by all", though the girl finished up unconscious.

An SOE document, *Sexologist's Stories*, is headed *Adults Only*, with a warning that it touches on "a rather ticklish subject". It says Himmler, head of the SS, was purported to be "protector" of a cult with the naked congregation indulging in orgies to the accompaniment of "encouraging chanting" from the high priestess — a lead singer of the Berlin State Opera.

Theodor Auer, the German consul in Casablanca, is described as "a queer" who was often seen on the beach with "Arab, French and Jewish bimbos". Oberleutnant Schmidt, the German propaganda chief in Paris, is described as a uniform fetishist who held gay orgies in his chateau at Brie, east of the French capital, with a swimming pool "with black mirror glass ... bathers are naked; parties take place in and out of the water".

SOE referred to pornography circulating among German soldiers in Africa which "quite frankly would make many a virgin turn in her grave". Officials in the Political Warfare Executive forged leaflets claiming the necessity of keeping up the German birth rate by allowing SS men to take the place of husbands who were at the front.

Führer was replaced by Himmler on forged stamps

POSTAGE stamps with the head of Heinrich Himmler, the SS chief, replacing Hitler's, changed hands among collectors at the end of the war at enormous prices, much to the amusement of the British agents who forged them, documents released yesterday show.

Sefton Delmer, a journalist assigned to the wartime Political Warfare Executive, and SOE agents devised the plan to sow discord in Germany by encouraging rumours of a plot to get rid of Hitler.

The six-pfennig stamps, franked with forged German postal addresses, were sent by SOE to neutral countries, including Sweden and Portugal.

SOE then successfully planted stories in Swiss and British newspapers encouraging speculation about dissent in the Nazi hierarchy.

One letter, franked with a Stuttgart postmark, led a puzzled Nazi administration to admit that the stamps had been produced in error.

Stamp collectors were not bothered — they were said to be willing to pay any price to get their hands on them.

It is for this reason that we must keep our hands absolutely clean and our mouths

tightly shut," Delmer warned a colleague.

The play was among many devised by British agents to destabilise Germany, including anonymous letters sent to bereaved German parents claiming their soldier sons had contracted cholera and had been given a "mercy injection", and forged instructions to German hoteliers urging them to save fat.

Pointing out that efforts to extract fat from human sewage were proving ineffective, the counterfeit document says: "It is the duty of every hotel manager in the interests of public welfare, to promote in every way possible the recuperation of fat ... Heil Hitler."

But the documents show that SOE experienced failure as well as success. A decision to parachute a German-born Jewish agent to sabotage Germany's V2 rocket production ended in spectacular failure. Lieutenant Robert Baker-Byrne was immediately approached by a plainclothes detective who recognised him from pre-war days.

One Berliner came up to him, saying "Becker [Baker-Byrne's family name], I always thought you were a Jew. How did you get into uniform?" Baker-Byrne fled to neutral Switzerland.

SOE officers, meanwhile, had a furious row with MI6, a rival agency, accusing it of failing to pass on intelligence about the penetration by German agents of the SOE network in Holland — a disaster for the Dutch resistance.

Death ends celebrated partnership

John Ezard

MICHAEL Denison, who with his wife Dulcie Gray forged the most durable stage and film partnership since the second world war, has died at the age of 82, it was announced yesterday.

Their theatrical bond lasted almost as long as the 56 years of their marriage. The couple also kept their romantic afterglow as film matinee idols of the late 1940s and early 1950s, a time when most of the British public went to the cinema once or twice a week.

The films in which they acted together included the immensely popular *The Glass Mountain* and *My Brother Jonathan*. When television started to seduce film audiences, Mr Denison switched to it easily in high-profile shows like *Boyd QC* and the spy series *Cold Warrior*.

He died of cancer on Tuesday at his home in Amersham, Buckinghamshire, after a short illness. Another veteran film star and friend from their youth, Sir John

Mills, was comforting Ms Gray.

Their theatrical agent, Barry Burnett, said yesterday: "Michael was one half of the most famous acting partnership we have seen."

"His last stage appearance was with Dulcie Gray in their two-person show *Curtain Up*, an evening of reminiscences, at the Jermyn Street theatre in London in April of this year. They were due to present it at another theatre again soon."

Between them, the couple acted in 90 West End productions — 30 of them together.

Obituary, page 10



Michael Denison as Boyd QC (left) in 1957 and with Dulcie Gray in *A Coat of Varnish* (1982)

Extra role for schools

John Garval
Education Editor

THE Government yesterday set out a vision of how schools will change in the 21st century to become "children's centres" available throughout the year to provide healthcare for toddlers as well as education for the whole community from cradle to grave.

Stephen Byers, the School Standards Minister, told MPs that it was no longer acceptable that school buildings were closed for nearly half the year. They should become community assets offering a wide range of services outside normal school hours.

Headteachers would provide educational leadership and set the key management priorities, but they would delegate many of their present duties to bursars who would

become responsible for meals, transport, buildings maintenance and administration.

Mr Byers said he was talking with health ministers about dovetailing investment programmes to share facilities in primary schools. They would become bases for the Sure Start programme announced by the Chancellor last week to bring together nursery, childcare and playgroup provision with post-natal and other health services.

Parents taking their children for a medical check-up would be told how to encourage early learning. "We want to combine children's services on one site... We will make links that are not there at the moment. For example we can identify at a very early age the children who are at risk of truanting."

By involving local authority social services depart-

ments, the primary centres could encourage early remedial action, he told the Commons education committee.

Secondary schools would also develop a wider role, forging links with employers and further education colleges and making their sports and learning facilities available to a wider community. "We are spending £2 billion on capital investment in schools which are open for 52 per cent of the days of the year and we are not yet getting a proper return on that big investment," he said.

A green paper in the autumn would pave the way for these changes by reforming teachers' pay, pensions and conditions. It would include plans to broaden the role of headteachers so they could become "educational leaders", developing their schools into community learning resource centres.

A lot of the administrative work could be delegated to bursars who might organise purchasing committees covering groups of primary schools.

The green paper would consider ways of persuading teachers to stay in the profession. Starting salaries were attractive for graduates, but many were leaving in their late 20s when pay levels slipped behind those available in other jobs.

Mr Byers said he would take a hard line on failing schools. "There are some which are beyond redemption. In future for a substantial period of time, my view is that they should be closed and the places allocated to schools which are performing well."

The money saved should be spent expanding other schools where parents want to send their children.

Sky bid to woo middle classes

Kamal Ahmed
Media Editor

RUPERT Murdoch's Sky satellite service launched an attempt to woo the middle classes yesterday, when it announced an upmarket overhaul of its film channels.

Sky Movies and the Movie Channel will be replaced by three services — Premier, MovieMax and Sky Cinema. At £24.99 a month, the cost will remain the same for the two top services — which will automatically include Sky Cinema.

Announcing the second relaunch of the struggling movie service in under a

year, Elizabeth Murdoch, Sky general manager, said she wanted to "extend the breadth and scope" of Sky's appeal. "After extensive customer research we have concluded that we can improve our service by creating differentiated channels that have a clear personality," she said.

Sky also announced details of a major move into film and programme making, and said it would put aside £20 million for exclusive deals with filmmakers to take their films straight to satellite before cinema release.

Barry Norman, who left the BBC last month for a reported £350,000 salary at Sky, spoke about his new film pro-

gramme, Barry Norman's Film Night, which will be on the Premier channel.

He said it would build on the strengths of the BBC's long-running Film 99 series.

"Reviews of the films of the week will still be the backbone, but we will have many other clever ideas to make this the definitive film programme," he said.

"The BBC shifted the programme I did for them all over the place. It was a way of massaging their ratings, which is what the managers became obsessed with."

Sky hopes that the changes, with Mr Norman known to appeal to an upmarket audience, will encourage new subscrib-

ers to the service which has seen subscriptions stagnate at around 2.9 million. The movie service's share of all viewing has also been falling, with the channel claiming 26 audiences of above 1 million for individual movies in 1996, compared with 22 last year.

Executives believe the company now has to move beyond its core "football and films" audience, and encourage new subscribers. Many people appear to be waiting for the launch of Sky's digital satellite service in the autumn.

Premier will show blockbuster first releases. MovieMax will offer "harder edge" films, and Sky Cinema will show popular classic films.



Socialists give French employers £2.7bn gift

Paul Webster in Paris

FRANCE'S Socialist-led government appeared to signal a shift to the right yesterday when it rejected demands for more public spending and approved a £2.7 billion tax cut for businesses in next year's budget.

The tax reduction, praised as economic realism by employers' leaders, was announced by the finance minister, Dominique Strauss-Kahn. Supported by the prime minister, Lionel Jospin, Mr Strauss-Kahn rejected internal pressure to concentrate the 1999 budget directly on job creation schemes, but claimed the concession to employers would enable them to recruit 100,000 more workers.

He dismissed traditional left-wing demands for more state aid for health and social programmes, promising even stricter spending curbs to reduce the public deficit to below the European single currency criterion of 2 per cent of GDP over the next 18 months.

Traditional left values were lampooned in a cartoon in the daily newspaper *Le Monde*, showing cigar-smoking bosses in a "good thing" bag marked 27 billion francs. They laugh as Mr Jospin tells them: "I give you 27 billion francs, but I'll take back two centimes for the diesel."

The drawing referred to another reform in yesterday's package that will raise the cost of diesel fuel over the next seven years to the same level as petrol, an anti-pollution measure to please the Greens. The package includes a symbolic tax increase on the 800 biggest personal fortunes, and a cut in VAT on household gas and electricity.

When the changes come before parliament in the autumn, Gaullists are expected to join communists and the Socialist Party's militant wing to press for a revision of priorities. Yesterday, the Gaullist-RPR said there was no benefit for the middle classes which had made the biggest contribution to economic recovery.

Mr Jospin's huge popularity after a year in office — his opinion poll ratings run at between 65 and 70 per cent — will enable him to ride out attacks over his reluctance to spread the benefits of a big economic upswing. Any lack of support on the left will be balanced by the enthusiasm of business leaders for a measure that removes taxes based on a calculation of the total wage bill. It will help to smooth the introduction of a 35-hour week by 2002.

Yvon Gattaz, the chairman of an association of big family-owned firms, said the reform was common sense and a continuation of concessions approved by two Gaullist prime ministers, Édouard Balladur and Alain Juppé, since 1993. The employers' equivalent of the CRR, the CNPF, described the package as "a good thing" saying "economic realism has prevailed".

After a mix of major and minor fiscal changes since the leftwing victory a year ago, overall tax revenue will decrease by more than £2 billion annually from next year. Mr Strauss-Kahn said this would be compensated for by increased income from improved economic growth.

"At the very least, predictions of a 3 per cent growth rate will be fulfilled," he said, adding that forecasts of 300,000 new jobs would be exceeded.

Migrants spur Rome to act

John Hooper in Rome

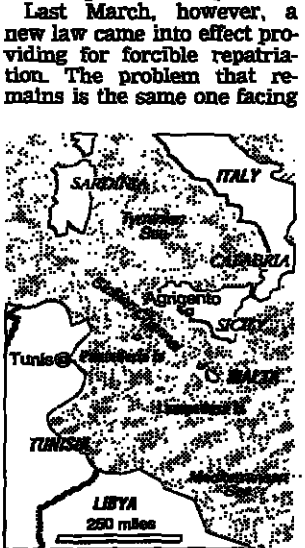
ALMOST 8,000 illegal migrants have poured into Italy since the start of July, the interior minister revealed yesterday.

As the government prepared a new initiative aimed at stemming the influx from North Africa, Giorgio Napolitano told a parliamentary committee that more than half of those detained in the latest wave were picked up on or near the islands of Pantelleria and Lampedusa. The remainder had landed on the mainland in the southern regions of Calabria and Puglia.

Recent warm weather and calm seas have provided traffickers with ideal conditions. Migrants from North Africa, Albania, Kosovo, sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian sub-continent and the Far East have all been reported among those detained in recent weeks.

As usual, some have failed to reach Europe alive. Coast guards on Pantelleria said earlier this week they had picked up the bodies of eight African men who their companions said had drowned after being forced overboard by traffickers anxious not to come too close to the shore. Most of the migrants landing on Italy's Mediterranean islands arrive on Tunisian-registered fishing boats. In the next few days, Mr Napolitano is expected to present to cabinet a plan to be put to the Tunisian authorities. According to newspaper reports, it would offer help in funding the equipment and resources needed to intercept traffickers near their ports of origin. Until recently, Italy was an easy target for migrants seeking to enter Europe. Entry without a visa was not normally an offence. Migrants were served with an expulsion order. But they were not escorted to the frontier, with the result that most either went to ground in Italy or fled to other parts of Europe.

Last March, however, a new law came into effect providing for forcible repatriation. The problem that remains is the same one facing



other countries — what to do with those who arrive without documents and refuse to disclose their country of origin?

Officials are understood to be seeking another deal with Tunisia that would allow them to return not only Tunisian nationals, but anyone setting off from Tunisia.

Rome's problems with immigration now have a more far-reaching impact. Last year Italy was admitted to the European Union's Schengen group of states that allow travel without a passport across mutual borders.



A nurse holds a child's hand at a hospital in Wau, southern Sudan. Famine is deepening in the country's rebel-held south

PHOTOGRAPH: ERIC FEFERBERG

UN watchmen accused of averting gaze from ethnic abuses inside Macedonia

Jonathan Steele in Gostivar, Macedonia

UNLIKE in Serbia's Kosovo province — where de facto apartheid means Serbs and ethnic Albanians go to their own cafes, schools and shops — Macedonia's two main communities still share amenities.

Yet for many Albanian Macedonians, the empty mayoral chair in the western town of Gostivar is a more potent symbol than the integration of public facilities. Mayor Rudi Osman recently started a seven-year prison term for flying the Albanian flag over the town hall. And the mayor of northern Tetovo, Aladdin Demiri, received 2½ years for a similar offence.

The mayors' supporters reject ministers' defence of the sentences as punishment for "separatism". "We accept the Macedonian state. That is not the

problem," says Menduh Thaci, the vice-president of the Democratic Party of Albanians (PDSE). "The issue is equal rights."

Foreign diplomats, he says, are "obsessed with stability, but it's on the back of the Albanians here". What the diplomats fear is that the north-western regions of Macedonia, where ethnic Albanians are in a majority, might try to secede and join Albania proper. A string of Western ministers travels ritually to the Macedonian capital, Skopje, to pledge support for President Kiro Gligorov.

They also like to trumpet Unpresep — the border force of foreign police and 750 American and Scandinavian troops who back them — as the first United Nations peacekeeping mission to be put in place before a war, in hopes of preventing a conflict. This week Kofi Annan, the UN secretary-general, urged that the force be enlarged.

The official mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force is to "strengthen Macedonia's security and stability".

From hi-tech watchtowers in the forests bordering Kosovo, the force guards Macedonia from a menace they call spill-over. But Macedonia's Albanians say the danger is not spill-

pendence, its ruling elite has tried to develop a new identity by, among other moves, defining the region's medieval churches as Macedonian Orthodox and by putting frescoes on the banknotes.

It has also riled its neighbours. The Orthodox church in Serbia refuses to accept the new ecclesiastical

"The international forces haven't finished their job," says an ethnic Albanian politician. "They should help to democratise this country"

over from Kosovo's communist independence fight, but existing abuses in Macedonia which the UN forces and foreign diplomats are doing very little to alter.

Macedonia was the most reluctant of the four republics that left Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. Since inde-

cal definitions, Bulgaria refuses to accept Macedonia as a separate language, and Greece even rejects the state's right to call itself Macedonia.

Albanians say a vital opportunity is being missed. "The international forces in Macedonia haven't fin-

ished their job. They should help to democratise this country," says Arben Xhaferi, the leader of the PDSE. They support the government "because they want a quiet situation, so we haven't had a transition from a communist state. We have just recycled communists in power."

Mr Xhaferi broke from the main Albanian party, the Party of Democratic Prosperity, which has five seats in the cabinet of the governing coalition. He says the party failed to win restoration of language and other rights.

"The government defines this state as mono-ethnic and marginalises other ethnic groups," says Mr Xhaferi. There is very little Albanian-language higher education, and Albanians are losing out in managerial jobs, he claims. Less than 5 per cent of the country's army officers are Albanian. Even in towns such as Tetovo and Gostivar where

85 per cent of the population is Albanian, most policemen are Macedonian.

Blagoj Handziski, the foreign minister, says it is unreasonable for one minority to be treated as a nation when the country has four others — Turks, Serbs, Roma and Vlachs. "We cannot accept any federalisation. We prefer a civil society with equal rights for all."

On the right, Macedonian chauvinism is rising. The VMRO, a hardline party with a long pedigree of violent nationalism, calls for the government to sack its Albanian ministers. The party is gaining support. The number of Macedonians who support the Albanians is tiny.

"Most people are Albanophobes, just as in Serbia," says Branko Geroski, the editor of *Dnevnik*. "The main issue here is the inter-ethnic one. Inside the country. This will make the difference between peace and war."

Communist offered cabinet job

James Mack in Moscow

A COMMUNIST MP who was the last head of the Soviet Union's discredited state planning organisation, Gosplan, was offered a senior government job yesterday by the prime minister, Sergei Kiriyenko.

With the ink barely dry on the International Monetary Fund's emergency loan to Russia, granted on the promise of tougher economic reforms, Mr Kiriyenko said Yuri Maslyukov, aged 61, was to become the country's trade and industry minister.

There was uncertainty last night as to whether Mr Maslyukov, who played a key role in drafting the economic programme of the Communist Party, was ready to take up the job in defiance of his party.

Yesterday he refused to

comment until President Boris Yeltsin confirmed the appointment. If he accepts the post, it will be anything but good news for Mr Zyuganov.

Mr Kiriyenko's announcement bears the hallmarks of a classic Yeltsin manoeuvre, directed from the northern forests of Karelia where the president is holidaying. Mr Maslyukov is one of the most prominent moderates in the Communist Party's 134-strong parliamentary group — he was among the party MPs who voted to confirm Mr Kiriyenko as prime minister in April. His move to the government could hasten the long-predicted Communist split between social democrats and radical Soviet revivalists.

The politician headed Gosplan in its darkest years, from 1988 to 1991, when the Soviet economic system under Mikhail Gorbachev was lurching towards breakdown.

He now favours the free market, in its controlled East Asian form, believes in limited protectionism and supports the latest IMF loan programme. As trade and industry minister, he would have wide responsibilities but little money to work with and limited access to the fragile triangle of financial, energy and welfare policy on which Russian stability depends.

"It's not such an important ministry. It doesn't determine macro-economic policy," said Andrei Plonkowski, a political analyst. "He will be involved in areas he is familiar with. The political advantages of his appointment outweigh any potential economic conservatism."

"He's from the social democratic wing of the party. This is a person who has openly challenged Zyuganov."

Mr Maslyukov's move will probably be followed by more

job offers to regional leaders, as an isolated Mr Yeltsin and Mr Kiriyenko try to build political support against the radical opposition and, more dangerous to them, the clique of powerful industrial barons who see their petrimonies threatened by the new economic climate.

Hours before Mr Kiriyenko announced Mr Maslyukov's appointment, a group of Russia's biggest oil companies issued a joint statement warning the government of violence if it did not change course. "The irreversible socio-economic occurrences which could take place in the next two to three months will be a direct result of the actions of the government, which has had enough opportunities to change the situation," the statement said. "We insist measures are taken without delay to prevent the crisis getting worse."

Greece puts super-clean island beaches to the Internet surf test

Helena Smith in Athens

WITH a little help from the Internet, British tourists can now surf the Greek waves before they set foot in sunny Hellas.

Access the Website and you'll get a daily fix of sea conditions and a review of the best island beaches. A £28 million monitoring programme aims both to promote and protect what the ancients were quick to see as Greece's biggest natural asset — the sea.

Every summer for six months, 1,217 swimming spots will be monitored at 1,705 sampling points for pollutants ranging from seaweed invasions to dangerous jellyfish and oil spills. The results will be recorded in cyberspace daily.

"Around 60 per cent of the population and 90 per cent of

the tourist industry is concentrated in coastal areas," the Greek environment minister, Kostas Laliotis, said. "These environmentally sensitive zones are the key to our ecological and economic future."

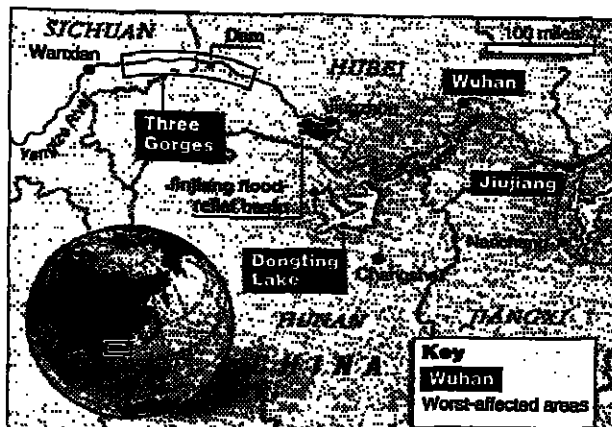
Mr Laliotis said although a recent pan-European survey had declared Greek beaches the best on the continent, the government had poured money into a huge clean-up operation along island and mainland shores.

"Dirty coasts mean a downgraded environment and downgraded tourism industry," he said. "We don't care how much money it takes, we will take the lead in Europe and save our coasts and seas."

With nature the buzzword, nudism comes next. Tourism officials say that plans to establish more nudist colonies at prime spots are also under way.



While authorities in Beijing race to shore up river defences, US states pray for a downpour amid 38C temperatures



Storms bring misery to China

Floods/10m are threatened by a man-made disaster, writes John Gittings

THE homes and lives of millions of Chinese are threatened by the worst floods on the Yangtze river for more than 40 years, authorities in Beijing warned yesterday. The vast Three Gorges dam project, now at a critical stage of construction, has been at risk, and almost all river traffic has been halted. President Jiang Zemin has intervened personally to order reinforcement of river dikes in the central Yangtze region which could collapse at any moment. The official press complains that warnings of disaster were ignored, and that corrupt local officials misappropriated flood control funds. More than 134,000 people are reported homeless in rural Boyang county near the city of Jiujiang. In the three river provinces of Hubei, Hunan and Jiangxi, 157 deaths have been confirmed, 29 towns have been flooded, three railways have been cut off and 450,000 houses destroyed. One natural disaster has followed another. On Monday hurricane-force winds swept through the Three Gorges. On Tuesday, 15 inches of rain fell on Wuhan city in 12 hours. A coffer dam, built to protect the Three Gorges construction upstream, was severely tested last weekend. Officials say it could be in greater risk if the next flood surge is even slightly higher.

The temporary dam was completed last autumn, with a lock and diversion canal so boats could move around it. But traffic was suspended last week, stranding more than 122,000 river passengers. The dam project straddles a broad lagoon where water used to pass freely. The canal has created a sluice-like effect that makes navigation much less safe. The artificial lock, intended for use in emergencies, has been overwhelmed. Some of the water threatening the central region could, in theory, be diverted into a huge flood relief basin at Jiujiang, excavated in the 1950s. But 300,000 people have settled in the area since then and would have to be evacuated. The Beijing-based China Daily said yesterday 230,000 people had been mobilised to protect the Dongting Lake area downstream. If the dikes are breached there, 10 million people in southern Hunan province will be at risk. Sweeping on, the flood has threatened Wuhan, the provincial capital of Hubei, where some streets are waist-deep in water. Embankments at Jiujiang, in the neighbouring province of Jiangxi, are being shored up in a desperate struggle to protect 1.4 million residents. Examinations for the floods — which have also hit southern China — range from global warming to the effects of El Niño. But Chinese experts believe the real causes are local deforestation, uncontrolled building and neglect of flood control. Some Yangtze dikes were already collapsing in May, before the rains. More than one-fifth of the 870-mile embankment was at risk, in what was called "a chronic problem left over from previous years".



Family members stranded on the roof of their home in Wuhan village, in China's northern Jiangxi province, wait their turn to be ferried to safety in a small boat

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN SHAWER

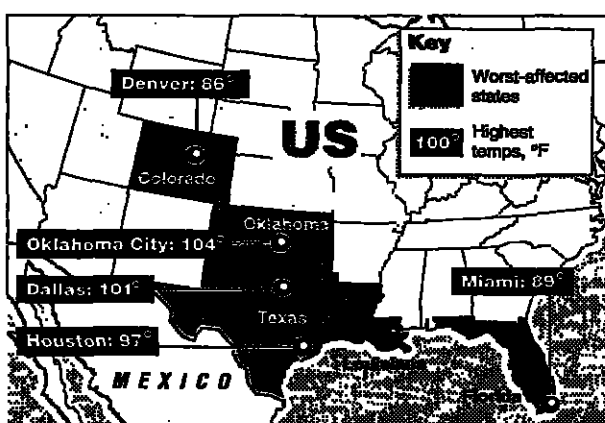
America withers under a remorseless sun

Heat/Life in the frying pan is described by Allan Myerson in Dallas

BY THE time the thermometer hit 38C (100F), the Dallas morning crowd were having to mix lorry-loads of ice cubes with the concrete to delay it setting long enough to let them smooth the paving into place. But while the Texas city is the focus of an exceptional heatwave, the effects are being felt across a great belt of the United States. From Florida through Texas to Colorado, nearly two months of incessant heat and drought have caused scores of deaths, burned out homes and withered crops. Now temperatures are also rising in eastern states, including Pennsylvania and Maine. Although the numbers are preliminary and may

prove overstated, local and state authorities have blamed the heat for 117 deaths, including 81 in Texas, 22 in Louisiana and 11 in Oklahoma. The last time the heat claimed more lives was in July 1996, when a deadly stretch of weather baked the eastern United States for about a week. As many as 500 deaths were weather-related in the Chicago area then, and refrigerated trucks were used to handle the overflow from the morgue. Most of the victims this year have been elderly women and men. While Florida has had some recent rainfall and relief, the outlook for Texas is more, much more, of the same. Yesterday marked the 17th consecutive day of 38C-plus readings in Dallas — making this summer the worst since 1980, which had the hottest ever. Dallas County health officials declared a state of emergency last week and other counties across the state are seeking federal disaster assistance to compensate for more than

here since early June, turning the earth into a vast radiator. The National Weather Service predicts no let-up in Dallas or the region until early next week, and perhaps not even then. As a matter of pride, many Texans want to prove how well they can hold up. On the Dallas highway crew, for instance, few men are willing to admit their limits. Arturo Gonzalez, a foreman, has to suggest tactfully to anyone looking faint that they join him on some errands in his air-conditioned pickup truck. The Salvation Army is among the agencies handing out fans, and the heat is causing homeless people to seek refuge indoors. The 286 beds in the Salvation Army's shelter in Dallas have been filled for the past two weeks, so another 40 people a night have slept on mats on the shelter's floor. — *New York Times*



A zoo bear at Brookfield in Illinois takes watery refuge

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News in brief

Obuchi 'within a few votes of victory' in race to lead Japan

KEIZO OBUCHI looked closer last night to becoming Japan's next prime minister after a media survey of the ruling party showed he was within a few votes of victory. The Kyodo News Service survey of the 413 Liberal Democratic Party MPs and party leaders showed that tomorrow for a new LDP president said Mr Obuchi, the foreign minister, had the support of "close to 200 delegates", about seven short of the majority he needs for a first-round win.

The survey said Mr Obuchi was far ahead of his rivals, Junichiro Koizumi, the health minister, and Seiichiro Kajiyama, a veteran politician, who were estimated to have about 70 votes each. About 70 MPs were undecided. If no candidate wins a majority in the first round, the leading two will face a run-off. But analysts believe Mr Obuchi can easily secure the votes he needs to win outright. The winner will replace Ryutaro Hashimoto as prime minister. — *Reuters, Tokyo*.

More arrests at Basque paper

Spanish police yesterday arrested Javier Salutregi, the head of the Egin daily newspaper, and an administrative assistant for alleged links to the Basque separatist group ETA, state radio reported. Basque government officials claim Egin has been used to publish coded messages to ETA commanders. Last week 11 people, many senior Egin staff, were arrested. — *Reuters*.

Island retaken

Yemen said its navy had regained control of the disputed island of Duwaila in the Red Sea yesterday. On Sunday three Yemenis were killed in clashes with Saudi Arabian troops over the island. — *Reuters*.

Beijing orders military to disband businesses to counter smuggling

CHINA'S President Jiang Zemin has ordered the military to shut down its vast business empire as part of a drive to end rampant smuggling, the state media reported yesterday. The order, issued this week to People's Liberation Army commanders, is a bold political stroke and confirms suspicions of military involvement in the illegal trade. The PLA owns a wide

range of businesses, from pharmaceutical companies to five-star hotels, and depends on them for more than a third of its day-to-day expenditure. Mr Jiang urged the commanders to understand that the PLA's reputation was at stake, Xinhua news agency reported. The move underscored the urgency of the week-old government crackdown on smuggling. — *AP, Beijing*.

Czech power shift

The Czech president, Vaclav Havel, yesterday appointed a minority centre-left Social Democrat cabinet led by Milos Zeman, completing the country's first shift of power to the left since the end of communism. — *Reuters*.

UN team in Algeria

Despite Algeria's long-standing opposition to external inquiries, a UN team arrived in Algeria yesterday to shed light

Deaths inquiry

The Sri Lankan government ordered an inquiry yesterday into the claim by a soldier opposing against his conviction for rape and murder that he and others were helping to bury hundreds of Tamil prisoners killed by security forces in the north. — *AP*.

Bail in sex trial

A court in Iran trying a German man for having sex with a local woman indicated yesterday that he would soon be freed on bail, a source said. Helmut Hofer was sentenced to death in January but a retrial was ordered after he claimed to have converted to Islam before the incident. — *AP*.

Suharto will wait

Indonesia's former president, Suharto, has asked the government to postpone a planned gift of \$1.2 million to him until the economy improves, the state secretary, Akbar Tanjung, said yesterday. The money is owed under a law dating from 1978 which helps former presidents and vice-presidents build a home. — *Reuters*.

Nun killer freed

A former El Salvador national guard in jail for 17 years for the rape and murder of three American nuns has been freed on parole, court officials said. Two other guards are expected to be released in the next two days. Lawyers had argued that the men were acting on orders from above. — *Reuters*.

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At the moment of his centenary, critics are finding holes not only in Henry Moore's figures, but in his reputation. The question is: are these real artistic gaps in his work or is the problem in our modern perception of him?

Peter Lennon investigates

Arts, G2 page 4

Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

I AM transfixed by rumours of an old friend, Richard Littlejohn, word has it, is attempting to buy his beloved Tottenham Hotspur from its sweet-natured owner Alan Sugar. When Mr Sugar took over the club, he announced that should Spurs fail to win the Premiership title in the next three seasons, he would gladly let "some other rocket scientist" have a go. It was Richard's intention, to use his first column to unclock himself as that rocket scientist. Alas, a first approach was met with indifference, while a meeting with Mr Sugar in February was indecisive. Even Richard's astounding salary from the Sun and Sky TV would not run to the tens of millions Mr Sugar would want, and his financial backer is thought to be Peterborough FC chairman Peter Boizot, a founder of the Pizza Express chain. Mr Boizot fails to return our call, and so does Richard who is on holiday in Florida. So we must be patient before learning whether our most cerebral columnist may shortly ride to poor old Tottenham's rescue. If so, one thing is certain. Make it up you undoubtedly could not.

AN anonymous letter arrives (for legal reasons, we cannot say from where) claiming that a local MP is facing legal action from a constituent over alleged "rudeness and threats". We would be happy to hear from that constituent, if he or she cares to call.

WHILE John Major touches the finishing touches to his memoirs, his northern Tory ally, the odd one out, says Terry, when my colleague Simon Bowers calls to check on him. "Since I got back from Alaska, I've been doing a spot of gardening. The lawn needs mowing and the bushes need a trim. And I'm thinking of remodeling the front garden as well. I think I'll do away with the grass." But why? "It's too much with my back. I can stick that pea-shingle stuff down. And then — and tell me what you think of the idea — I can get one of those nice big tubs cut the bottom out, and bury it up to the rim to make a small bed. You know, those new plastic tubs that look like weathered stone. What do you think?" We think it sounds splendid and on this tantalising snippet alone, we hereby appoint Terry Major-Ball the Diary's first Gardening Correspondent.

FROM Labour North West in Worthington comes a newsletter, Rosette, concerning next June's elections to the European parliament. Apart from explaining the D'Hont electoral system, Rosette prints an example of the ballot paper that will be used, on which each major party lists 10 candidates. The Green Party, for example, will field, among others, Snowflake Smith and Zing Zing Zippy. While there is nothing surprising here, the name of one Labour candidate catches the eye. Listed at number eight is a certain Dolly Draper. He's back, just as he promised us... but sooner than anyone can possibly have dreamt.

MEANWHILE, Dolly seeks to recruit staff for his excellent magazine Progress. "Committed, loyal party members who want a say in the direction of labour government, sought for Progress, the Labour activists network," reads the advert. "Open mind but firm principles necessary" (firm what?). "Little remuneration." Ah yes, leading by example. But of course.

THE Diary's long quest for a picture of Oofy Wegg-Prosser may soon be over. Private Eye has one, and prints it in an exclusive article revealing for the first time the 17 most important people in Britain Dolly referred to recently. Oofy (whose cousin Gussy Fink-Nottle is also named among the 17) is a surprisingly handsome young thing, and bears an almost eerie facial resemblance to Macaulay Culkin. We will be negotiating a price with Ian Hislop, and hope to publish it here very shortly.

Pushing back the perverted tide of Camp, cross-dressing FULTH! (Fig. 1)



It is Paddy's anniversary waltz, but Blair is still calling the tune

Hugo Young



AFTER 10 years, the moment of truth approaches. In politics more than most trades, triumph intermingles with the prospect of calamity: indeed is often defined by the proximity of ruin staring the hero in the face, only to be miraculously avoided.

So things are with Paddy Ashdown. Ten years is a long time to survive alongside Thatcher, Major and Hague, not to mention Kinnock, Smith and Blair. Survival is not what Mr Ashdown, with some justice, would say he has done. Forty-six MPs and 25 per cent of the local election vote speak for something better. But apothecia lives in the shadow of disaster.

This is why Paddy won't be retiring soon. Poised on the edge, he thinks political life has never been more thrilling. The Liberal project, under the hand of a basically Liberal leader by the name of Blair, is coming about. The progressive left emerges as the bastard progeny of Harold Wilson, more truly the descendant of Jo Grimond. But will Ashdown and his Liberal Democrats come into their inheritance? We will know in about three months.

The answer depends on a single event, the response to Lord Jenkins's commission on electoral reform. This is what progressive politics will soon be almost all about. For Ashdown, it comes down to an even narrower conjunction, between electoral reform and the mind of Tony Blair. There will be a report, and then a referendum. It is what the Lib Dems are living for, but it does not give unchallenged grounds for optimism.

From Blair, the reform question demands a delicate but defining judgment. Though studiously sceptical

in public so far, he can hardly want to come down as an anti-reformer. Yet, as I have argued before, asking the voters to throw out a system that produced, in 1997, a result they apparently remain proud of is an unsettling suggestion. For a popular leader to cast doubt on his own legitimacy may have unpredictable effects on the electorate. Only when people are discontented with politics, perhaps, can they be goaded into changing the rules. And they are not now discontented. Irrespective of what Blair might think about voting systems, he faces the serious risk of losing a referendum: a risk he might prefer not to run.

For Ashdown, the risk is twice that. For a referendum to be held without Blair's support would signal the end of the collaborative project. There are plenty of Lib Dems, including Lib Dem MPs, who would regard such a Blair performance as total treachery, and would look forward to strangling the Ashdown project there and then. Equally calamitous, though, for Ashdown as well as Blair, would be a No majority. That, too, would end the Grimondite dream.

This is the level of the stakes. So what might make them worth risking? For Ashdown, the opportunity Blair then creates to do what he really wants: take revenge on the aberrant Tory ascendancy of the 20th century, and create the pluralist politics that will guarantee its opposite in the 21st. Even a modest form of proportional representation would change the shape of politics for ever. This, says the optimist, appeals equally to Blair the reformer and Blair the big-picture strategist, the supposed devilder, the believing pluralist. And

there will not be an opportunity to match the moment for a referendum in 1999.

It is an appealing prospect. But how can it be made sufficiently believable? How can Blair cash in his popularity, rather than see it debarring him from the result he wants? Only, it seems, by linking what happened in May 1997 to what must happen next. Electoral reform would have to be presented as the natural culmination of 1997: the completion of modernity, the removal of power from a rigged establishment anachronism with dubious democratic credentials, and its returning to the people.

THERE are problems with this message, beginning with the fact that New Labour has never yet tried to put it across. It involves an explicit recognition of the merits of Lib-Lab pluralism which Ashdown and, more mutedly, Blair are almost alone in daring enthusiastically to embrace. There will be many cities, in the 1998 local elections, where the two parties are at each other's throats, the Tories having already been obliterated. Proposing an electoral revolution is work which, at every level from ward to nation, would appear to require a crusade that has not even begun.

Getting it across, moreover, is likely to have more to do with politics than with the higher democratic virtues. To be gathered successfully into the Blair project, PR will need to be presented rather openly as a way of entrenching the progressive majority in power in the 21st century. Though decorated with genuine arguments about fairness, representativeness, and the value of coalitions, the core case will be political: throttle

for ever the chances of a hard-line (Thatcherite) party coming to power on a minority vote. One consequence of this, however, will be to hand most of the fairness case to the beleaguered Tories. Even though the Conservatives, arguably, need PR a lot more than Labour, it will be unhelpful in atavistic opposition: a galvanising opportunity Blair might be glad not to hand to his main enemy.

How to respond to Jenkins, whatever Jenkins says, is a big decision. It's as big as any decision the leader will have to take. I say leader advisedly. Few in his government have any idea why he is doing any of this stuff. His grasp of the bigness of the picture is unique to him. If, despite many tempting reasons to do otherwise, he drives hard for a Yes vote in the referendum he's not posturing, he'll be showing a commitment to new politics for which there is no case to be found in short-term necessities. He will gamble party unity and his own invincibility on a very large outcome.

If, on the other hand, he backs off, it will be the end of the most distinctive experiment latent in the wings of Blairism. Majoritarian politics will be locked back in. It will also be the end of Paddy Ashdown. He's been amazingly successful in guiding the Lib Dems to a central role on big questions. He used his 10th anniversary speech last night to signal the mother-and-father of policy debates at this year's party conference, when he will seek approval for a series of re-directions away from traditional Lib Dem localism towards a more national profile. Big stuff. Preparing for coalition office. But if Blair jumps the wrong way, Ashdown will be buried.

What is being protected from whom? It's hard for gay kids to be confident about themselves with so much bigotry flying around, or to protect themselves from truly dangerous situations.

Especially if friends, parents and teachers are persuaded of how awful gay sexuality is.

How can we face this highly effective onslaught

of stupidity and nonsense? When an unelected chamber has the support of the majority of the printed press and retains the power to throw out a government bill, what chance has a minority social group in fighting for equal status?

If the breath of social fairness is to regenerate this country the Lords cannot continue to dominate debate in this way. Even their points of reference are antiquated (Baroness Young talks of sexual development as if it all takes place in a boys' public school).

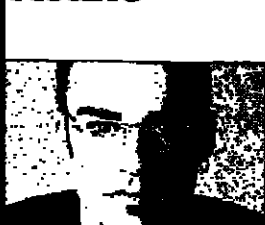
Without the right of a democratically-elected government to deliver what it promises, the views of the majority of kind, fair-minded British people will remain in thrall to the prejudices of a divisive agenda.

Jonathan Keane writes for the Pink Paper

Gay kids haven't much of a hope, it seems, while the Lords cling to their power

Out the Peers

Jonathan Keane



THE last-minute attempts to derail the bill cutting the age of gay consent to 16 make it clear that a substantial alliance of opinion formers and right wing politicians will never accept the advance of gay equality.

This cast of diehards — worthy of a political blockbuster — includes the formidable presences of the George Carey, Archbishop

of Canterbury and former Tory leader of the Lords, Baroness Young, supported by choruses of disapproval from those irrefutably sensible organs the Daily Mail and the Daily Telegraph.

Baroness Young, who has a 16-year-old grandson herself, believes that 16-year-old boys "can go through a phase of perhaps hero worship, liking an older man, and then come out of it".

She's quite right of course, although it isn't always a man that schoolboys go a little dewy eyed over. I fell hopelessly in love with my music teacher Miss Salt. It's lucky I wasn't inducted into the rather confused and prejudiced world of heterosexuality, instead of becoming the well-adjusted homosexual I am now.

At the time of the Commons vote last month, the principal campaigner against its passage was

Teenagers don't, on the whole, want to sleep with old gay men

advances of older men — "the floodgates will be open" as the Baroness calmly put it. Moreover, says the Mail, those lobbying for the bill are a "minority of homosexuals" who would gain the legal right to "induct into their

world boys uncertain about their own still developing sexuality". In short, gay men were conflated with paedophiles and young men stereotyped as pathological victims.

Because the Commons supported this fall into what the Archbishop called a morally unhealthy society it is, it seems, the Lords who "can prove a model of how to care for the young".

There is nothing, sensible about what these people are saying. When the gay community achieved the "Sixteen" vote, there was no lascivious jubilation. No sudden declarations of "Yes we can have sex with adolescent boys". (Gay teenagers do not on the whole hold with sleep with wrinkly old gay men.)

For many people of my 25 years and above, the successful Commons vote came as justification (too late) of who we are. It is the mem-

Listening is for losers

Roy Hattersley



POLITICAL parties in extremis all exhibit despair in much the same way. Labour "listened" in 1988 and now the Tory party are doing much the same — not just taking note of what the people say they want and responding to their wishes, but ostentatiously touring the country with its collective head cocked on one side like an attentive budgerigar.

It William Hague really wanted to tailor-make his policies to public opinion he would behave like the government and get his own version of Philip Gould to put every proposal in a focus group. New Conservatives could follow New Labour, New Sunf and New Dax. The Tories want to be noted as listening. The posture is intended to illustrate Ann Widdecombe's moderation, Michael Redwood's humility and John Howard's open mind.

It is possible that the Tory listening posts have been packed with typical party activists, men and women too bone-headed to ask anything except: "When do we stand up and give the leader his ovation?" But if the audiences are real cross-sections of thinking England, I would bet my substantial weight in single European currency that the participants would come in two categories.

One will refuse to express opinions, believing that politicians are paid to tell the people how they will improve society. The other will demand immediate harnessing of a hobby horse that they have ridden for years.

We launched Labour Listening in the autumn of 1988. The first session was held at a Brighton hotel with the sea so high and the wind so fierce that great waves broke over the promenade and lashed against the windows. All I could think of was Key Largo — a film in which the typhoon symbolised the destruction of a defeated mob of small-time hoodlums. Fortunately, there was no vengeful Humphrey Bogart waiting to gun us down one by one. I would not claim that the assembled audience liked the visiting politicians. But they did not hate us half as much as they hated each other.

Wisely, we had not invited what politicians patronisingly call ordinary people. We had assumed that any unattached individuals who attended would (assuming they were not sheltering from the rain) be ordinary to the point of madness. So we assembled what we believed to be representatives of key organisations. The spokesman for animal rights demanded the

prohibition of circuses. The delegates from the field sports societies complained about the threat to hunting. Ex-servicemen called for a bigger standing army and several new aircraft carriers. Pacifists argued for a reduction in the defence budget. All they agreed about was the need for higher public expenditure and lower taxes.

There would have been no point in quoting Edmund Burke's famous dictum to his Bristol electors. "Your representative owes you not his industry only, but his judgement and he betrays instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion." The electors of Brighton were absolutely clear that their opinions were all that mattered. And, if they had reposed the slightest confidence in our judgment, we would not have done so spectacularly badly at the previous general election.

TO MY astonishment, there was not a single disciple of John Rawls amongst them so the notion that democratic governments have a duty to adjudicate between conflicting liberties had passed them. They all believed that democratic governments had an obligation to find ways of gratifying their obsessions.

Labour went on listening for nearly six months — simply because we had nothing else to do. At the time, those of us who went through the experience thought that our behaviour was, at worst, no more than ridiculous. In fact, we were guilty of one of the most serious political crimes. We were campaigning under false pretences. The innocents who turned up really believed that they were helping to shape the policies of T M Opposition and might even have influenced a future government. In fact, they were taking part

The audience hated each other. Waves lashed the windows. We lost

in a doubly cynical exercise. Labour was attempting simultaneously to appear responsive to new ideas whilst getting the names of its old leaders into the papers.

And that is exactly what William Hague will be doing as he tours the country, and the result will be the same as it was for us. He will lose the next general election. What little chance he has of winning requires him to abandon silly stunts and sit down with a few cerebral members of the shadow cabinet and work out some sensible policies to offer the electorate. Those policies should be based on a consistent and coherent ideological principle which, for the sake of argument, we will call modern conservatism. The idea that meetings with the public can contribute to that is all part of a fantasy — of a party leader who has to think of how to pass the time between now and the next defeat.

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Bromide for fat cats

Higher tax is an option

THE TIME has now come for the Government to do something about a problem that won't go away: top salaries. Ever since Labour was returned to power the Chancellor has been warning about the need to restrain wages in order to prevent the present economic recovery from being undermined by inflationary pressures. Yet company directors, who are supposed to possess powers of leadership, have cocked a snoot at the Chancellor's exhortations. As our annual survey of top salaries shows, they awarded themselves increases (excluding other incentives like stock options) of 18 per cent last year. This was over four times the increase in average earnings of 4.4 per cent — which Mr Brown feels is too high anyway. There is no evidence that the bonanza in salaries was the reward for big improvements in efficiency because Britain's productivity record at the moment is very poor. They have been awarded by remuneration committees often consisting of non-executive directors who are themselves the beneficiaries when the same system is applied to their own companies. They agree increases with reference to current market conditions which makes large increases self-fulfilling, a gravy train that could run for ever.

No one minds executives being rewarded for outstanding performance. But that is not what is happening. Directors are being awarded increases irrespective of whether they are good or bad. Nor can the increases

be justified as a reward for higher share prices. The 25 per cent increase in share prices in 1997 surprised practically everyone — including highly paid City analysts, none of whom saw it coming. It had nothing to do with increased managerial effort. And let no one pretend that this sort of behaviour doesn't affect the real world. The recent rise in average earnings is partly because the index includes high bonus payments for the better-off. More important, boardroom greed sends the wrong signal to the shop-floor. How can employees take calls for restraint seriously when their bosses have got their snouts so deep in the trough that they can't hear a word of what is being said?

It is argued that nothing can be done about top pay because of market forces and globalisation. This is not true. At the very least, the Government could compel directors awarding themselves above average increases to explain themselves in the annual report. Enlightened companies like Marks & Spencer already try to keep the same percentage rises for all. This still gives directors a huge advantage because 5 per cent of £225,000 a year (the average salary for a top director) is worth over £40,000 whereas 5 per cent of £20,000 is worth only £1,000. Better still, the Government should insist that directorial increases above the average for the firm have to be voted on first by the shareholders before being paid out. If this doesn't work the Government should consider raising the top rate of tax. In the 1970s it was generally agreed that the top rate of income tax (at 83 per cent) was grossly unfair (though it didn't seem to affect economic growth adversely). Since then it has been reduced to 40 per cent enabling top earners to keep an extra £43,000 out of every £100,000 they earn. Far from showing any gratitude they have kept increasing their salaries year in and year out

by far more than their employees'. This is neither fair nor efficient. In opposition Labour was very vocal about fat cat pay. In government it is making impressive strides towards moulding Britain into a fairer and more efficient society. But it won't succeed if the gap between earned income at the bottom and unearned increases at the top continues to widen. If Britain's directors are unable to understand the word "restraint" then they will have to learn the hard way.

Paddy's decade

Now keep up the good work

NO ONE will mind too much if Paddy Ashdown fails to appear at his desk at seven o'clock this morning, as per his usual routine. He might well be nursing a sore head after last night's bash at the Waldorf hotel to mark his 10 years at the head of the Liberal Democratic party — and who can blame him? The faithful are bound to have been in abundant mood, cheering a leader who has taken his party from the wilderness years of the SLD — hardly salad days — to the high watermark of May 1997, which saw the party win 46 seats and its largest Commons presence since 1935.

Mr Ashdown has earned his bragging rights, both as electoral tactician and long-term strategist. The era of the Alliance saw an attempt to replace Labour as the party of anti-Conservative opposition. In 10 years, Paddy Ashdown has moved his troops away from that doomed goal, first to the policy of "equidistance" from both main parties and then to today's strategy of "constructive opposition" by which the Lib Dems do not hide their proximity to Labour — supporting them where they agree, opposing where they disagree. He has steered these changes

without splitting his party or sparking a single challenge to his leadership, all the time boosting the Lib Dems' poll ratings and their success rate at local level. He has been an effective performer, fluent on television and human enough to survive a minor personal scandal and still enjoy wide public respect.

The main achievement of his past, however, is also the greatest dilemma of his future. Constructive opposition has brought great gains for the Liberal Democrats. Mr Ashdown can boast that the goals which were for so long Lib Dem pipe-dreams — devolution, freedom of information, changes to the House of Lords, moves toward proportional representation — are now becoming real, with his party granted a seat at the reforming table. The trouble is, as many Lib Dems grumble, all this close co-operation with the Government could swallow them up. If they agree so much with Labour, why should voters bother to back them? Moreover, if the Government loses popularity, the Lib Dems might be tainted by association. Paddy Ashdown's task now is to maintain co-operation, while retaining the Lib Dems' distinctive identity. The way to do that is to keep generating fresh ideas, like last week's call for a constitution for Europe. If he can keep that up, Paddy's next 10 years may be even more fruitful than his first.

A nip for the road

Having their cake and eating it

AMONG the old-fashioned virtues — such as walking to school — which are being revived in the transport white paper, the return of the greasy spoon may feature less prominently. But truckers were said to be

celebrating yesterday as the news of a passage in the white paper calling for improvement of "roadside facilities" for lorry drivers began to circulate. Chipped mugs of strong tea were being lifted in laybys on "A" roads throughout the country, with cries of "I wouldn't mind having that John Prescott in my cab". Or so the Road Haulage Association would have us believe yesterday, as its spokesman offered the deputy prime minister "a good square meal during the journey back up to Hull".

The problem with this particular revival is that greasy spoons are... very greasy. As the Partridge Dictionary of Slang explains succinctly, the name — first applied to US railroad eating houses in the 1930s — "derives from the state of the cutlery". If the decline of the roadside cafe is to be reversed, it will surely need to be accompanied by much higher standards.

Fortunately a model is on hand: yesterday by coincidence also saw the 90th anniversary of the first Lyons Corner House, that much-loved British institution which was shamefully driven off the high street by fast food outlets and pizza bars. Why not transfer the Corner House ethic of "good food at reasonable prices in exceptionally smart and clean surroundings" to the transport cafe? The staff — "Nippies" as they might again be called — would wear white starched aprons with a bill book attached on a black cord. They would be inspected every morning to make sure that the seams in their stockings were straight. They would learn how to slice a tomato into nine equal slices. No bread roll would ever be more than one hour old — and the cutlery would always be clean. The only remaining question is whether lorry-drivers today would go for the Battenburg Cake or the Viennese Whirl — and would they always remember to use the sugar-tongs?

Letters to the Editor

The other side of the story

THE Orange Order does not deserve to be held responsible for the actions of the brutal killers of the three young Queen brothers in Belfast. The Irish people as a whole should be held accountable for the dastardly deeds of Sinn Féin/IRA over the past 30 years. The vast majority of Orangemen abhor these horrific murders, just as much as anyone else.

Brian M Maxwell,
Leader of Portsmouth Loyal Orange Lodge No. 11.

MY COUSIN Melissa Bell (Letters, July 22) is being a bit hard on her father's misquoting G K Chesterton during the Tatton general election campaign. The two lines allegedly misquoted do actually appear in Chesterton's poem "The Secret People" (save for a trivial alteration of "but to that"), but as the first and penultimate lines rather than consecutively. Professor Anthony King appears to have been misled on this point in his fine election study by taking the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations as his source rather than the poem itself. Oliver Kamm.

WITH all the emphasis on sex at the Lambeth conference, one is reminded of the bishop who said: "There's nothing I enjoy more than going to bed with a good Trollope".
David L Gosling,
Cambridge.

IF you metropolitan types and your open relationships (Can open marriages ever work? July 20) Real grown-ups don't have the time or energy for such frumpies. After work, children, cooking, cleaning and shopping, all I want when I go to bed is a damn good snooze (and so does my husband).
Valerie Elson,
Whiston, Merseyside.

WILLIAM Barrett (Letters, July 21) may not wish to see Jeremy Paxman naked, but I wouldn't mind. Should I stop paying my licence fee forthwith?
Alison Collins,
Swindon.

Boardroom bashing

YOUR front page yesterday (The boardroom bonanza) looked depressingly familiar. Cadbury, Greenbury and Hampel have come and gone, with the boardroom's desire for self-regulation persistently reasserted. These arguments would have more force, and longer shelf-life, if certain boardrooms started to show less of a recidivist tendency in the area of executive pay. Although the Chancellor has repeatedly called for pay restraint, some business leaders seem likely to test the public's patience to the limit, as well as that of the shareholders and employees.

The Government has recently launched a wide-ranging review of company law, and has not ruled out the possibility of legislation where corporate governance still found wanting. Businesses would be advised to take this review very seriously indeed.

Tony Morgan,
Chief executive,
The Industrial Society.

INSTEAD of moaning that they can do little about the 18 per cent executive pay rise, why can't the Government produce a league table ranking companies by the ratio of

the highest paid to the lowest paid? Such a social index, though initially crude, would at least allow the real hypocrites to be exposed and create a "bottom 100 FTSE index" for ethical investors to consider. But will a government obsessed with output measures and performance-related pay be prepared to set targets for the real business pals, as they are trying to do for schools?

Or they could really go to town and develop other performance indexes, such as the ratio of average boardroom salary — including all the "off the book" share options and other perks — to annual profits.

Is this not a job for Chris Woodhead and the Government's "fair employment" legislation?
Dave Sutton,
Bristol.

NEW CBI president, Sir Clive Thompson, claims that high salaries for his directors and low pay for his workers are "good for the economy". Whether or not this is so, it is undoubtedly bad for health, since growing evidence suggests that the wider the income gap, the wider the health gap. For example, infant mortality in

social classes IV and V in the UK is twice as high as in Sweden. In America's booming economy, the gap has now widened to the point where a child born in Bangladesh has a greater life expectancy than a child born in Harlem. Is this the society Sir Clive seeks to create?

Donald Reid,
Chief Executive,
Association for Public Health.

THE sickening display of greed by Clive Thompson, who believes he "earns" £1.45 million while his staff earn £2,727, could be easily cured. Instead of having a minimum wage, why not have a maximum differential? It's inequality that hurts, not maximums and minimums.

Alan Perrow,
Clapham,
North Yorks.

SO Clive Thompson thinks that a minimum wage of \$3.80 an hour is too high? As Franklin D Roosevelt said in 1938: "Do not let any calamity-hoarding executive with an income of \$1,000 a day, tell you that a wage of \$11 is going to have a disastrous effect on all American industry".
Sanjay Sachdev,
Cambridge.

Hospital stay takes the pain away

JOHN Grace writes (Day Stripper, 22 July 21) of the considerable post-operative pain that some patients experienced after day case surgery. This is often not mentioned in pre-operative advice and counselling.

The proponents of this kind of care can rightly demonstrate that it is efficient, speedy and safe, and often takes place in a modern, comfortable environment that may be in marked contrast to other parts of the elderly NHS. Nevertheless, research into the pain-relieving drugs commonly given to patients to take home with them after surgery has often revealed that a large proportion of patients having particularly surgical procedures experience moderate or severe pain in the 24 hours after the operation.

While day case surgery may

result in shorter waiting times, I suspect that patients are rarely told that, were they to have the surgery as an inpatient, more powerful and effective pain-relieving and anti-sickness drugs would be available. If patients were given this information, it would be interesting to see how many would then insist on an admission.

An honest discussion of these problems should be part of the pre-operative advice given to patients.

Dr I Spencer,
(Consultant in anaesthetics)
Durham.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters. We regret we cannot acknowledge those not used. The Country Diary is on Page 10

Morse code

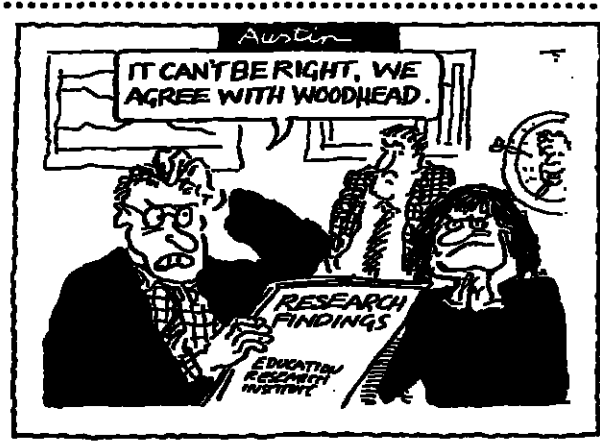
THE obituary for Alec Robb, also known as Castles, (July 19) failed to reveal his role in the creation of the great fictional detectives, Inspector Morse and Sergeant Lewis. He introduced the author of the Morse books, Colin Dexter, to both Morse and Lewis. The event was a crossword dinner attended by Dexter, Jeremy Morse, later Sir Jeremy and chairman of Lloyds Bank; and Dorothy Taylor, who compiled the Observer's Everyman with Alec. Sir Jeremy was a crossword fanatic and provided the inspiration for the inspector, while Dorothy Taylor provided Lewis. She had used the name as an alias so she could secretly carry on entering Observer crosswords after she became a compiler there.

Anthony Quinn,
Watford.

has shown he is on message, and we can expect the Lords to play a bigger role in curbing offshore abuses.

Andrew Hinxley,
Law lecturer,
University of London.

THE appointment of non-lawyers to the law lords is not Lord Irvine's only change of heart. The Human Rights Bill contains a gap where the independent Human Rights Commission should be. Such a commission is vital if our protection is not to be left to the accident of individual enthusiasm or willingness to pursue cases. These words are the Lord Chancellor's own (as you reported on Tuesday).
Andrew Pinddphatt,
Director,
Charter 88.



Putting the cart before the horse

DESPITE Hugo Young's assertion (The day of the roaming motorist, July 21), the 1989 white paper, Roads for Prosperity, did not say that "roads should expand infinitely to fit the cars whose drivers desired to use them".

It did not apply to urban roads, but proposed a measured investment programme to modernise the main inter-urban road system as most other industrial countries had done. This was not "insane" but common sense, as the failure to invest since has shown. The resulting congestion adds to costs, pollution and global warming.

Public transport needs to be improved too, but at least this will maintain its market share which has been falling. Road users should pay the full costs of their journeys — but they already pay £30 billion in taxes compared with some 26 billion spent on roads. By reducing congestion, new roads would "generate" some extra traffic but this amounts to saying that inadequate roads suppress trips which people need or want to make. The latest White Paper appears to do little or nothing to address this major problem of inter-urban transport.

Sir Alan Bailey,
London.

A male view

LINDA Grant (Honestly, I don't hate them, but why are men like that? July 21) would understand men better if she were to accept that they are just like women in most cases.

Men do call — sometimes. If they don't, why can there not be a whole range of reasons, including the fact that they are probably scared to do so? And why is it against etiquette (as it is the 90s?) for women to call men?

Have men got only one thing on their minds? Surely it is quite possible for a man to fancy a woman and not proposition her? This is what happens in most cases. Can't Linda have a friendship that is not based on sex? Men know what they feel, but they may not want to express it, or may not express it in a way that women would approve. Women ask what you feel, then tell you that you are wrong and that you are feeling something else that fits their stereotyped ideas.

Linda asks how can men be so stupid, but also answers her

own question. Women are just as stupid. Why should men be less so?

Linda brings a stereotyped approach to this: men are such and such, women are something other, and better.

I'm probably a sad over-the-hill sexist pig, but I love women, and would probably like Linda as a friend if she didn't scare me so "less".
Chris Wizzell (Male,
I'm afraid),
Tonbridge.

Children's health and independence is being seriously impaired because of our society's car addiction. Three out of four children were accompanied to school by their parents and 6 per cent travelled alone.

Fear of strangers was the main reason cited by parents for choosing how their child travelled. But 50 times as many children are killed on the roads than are murdered by a stranger.

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Pale blue

SINCE Norman Fowler made reference (Best in blue, July 21) to his erstwhile directorship with Group 4, it is perhaps right that we should place on record this company's belief that the private sector can work with the police, even for the police, but can never replace them. We can help with crime prevention and improvements in safety, but law enforcement is a matter for the police alone.

J Philip-Sorensen,
Chief executive,
Group 4 Securitas Ltd.

Means-test will not remedy poverty among pensioners

IT IS difficult to understand why the Government is following one strategy in developing health and education, and another in developing pensions.

The principle of free access to health care has been enlarged and free eye tests for the elderly, for example, have been restored. But it highlights the different ethic behind the policies on the NHS and pensions, as eligibility for free eye tests will depend only on age, not on income.

The Government proposes less means-testing in the NHS, but more means-testing for pensions. Instead of higher pensions by right, fulfilling the manifesto pledge that pensioners should get a fair share of rising prosperity, the Government offers the poorest a modest increase in means-tested income support, disguised as a "minimum income guarantee". This will perpetuate the high administrative costs and the disincentive to

savings which characterise all means-tested benefits.

It is a mystery why the Chancellor ignores popular and successful social insurance. Thoroughly modernised, it can provide many people with the only opportunity they will have to obtain minimally adequate pensions on their retirement, and create a contract between the generations, restoring the earnings link for existing and future pensioners.

We welcome the Government's commitment to higher spending on health and education. But successful public services also depend on adequate pensions (and other benefits). The two have to be brought together in the new three-year spending programme. Poverty is incompatible with either good education or good health.

Barbara Castle,
House of Lords.
Peter Townsend,
University of Bristol.

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Millett judged and found wanted

YOUR front-page splash (Secret men of justice, July 18) on the newly appointed law lords reminds us of Labour's U-turn on setting up a Judicial Appointments Commission, but your legal correspondent misses the significance of the promotion of Millett. I. J. She knows only three things about Peter Millett: he is a freemason; a commercial lawyer; and he favours the state over the individuals. These facts obscure a far more interesting story.

Freemasonry, to us outsiders, connotes secrecy and favouritism. But Millett, who makes no secret of being a mason, is the least secretive of our judges. In the last three

years, he has published five long articles in law journals explaining his recent decisions and expounding his policy for the future. As a result, his social and moral views are a matter of public record.

Before becoming a chancery judge, Millett was a chancery commercial lawyer. Chancery, since the days of Henry VIII, has been the only English court which listens to moral arguments; Millett views the world of commerce through moral spectacles. Before becoming a judge, he was involved in the 1970s moral crusade against Rosminster-style tax avoidance. Since becoming a judge, he has rid the City of its most blatant money-launderers and is at present campaigning against the sham offshore trusts which are their favourite tool.

Thirdly, whenever the state moves against them, money-launderers and tax evaders complain that their human rights have been abused. The only way that cocaine and uranium smugglers, transistors and inside-trader can claim public sympathy is by asserting their human right to financial secrecy. When tackling immorality in the global markets, the important polarity is between offshore and onshore. Blair and Brown are anxious to bring the City back onshore. The implications of Millett's promotion are that Lord Irvine

Alan Shepard

Finding fame in 15 minutes

ALAN Shepard, the first American to be launched into space and the oldest astronaut ever sent to the Moon, has died at the age of 74. Though his countrymen made a tremendous fuss about his 15-minute flight from Cape Canaveral on May 5, 1961, it had already been thoroughly upstaged nearly a month earlier by the Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's 90-minute circuit of the globe.

From President Kennedy's inaugural declaration that the United States would land men on the moon within a decade, the implicit assumption had been that only America had the technology and the money for the job. The launch of the first Soviet Sputnik on October 4, 1957 came as a huge shock. In the words of John Glenn, then under training for the Moon project, "They just beat the pants off us."

More cogent than the blow to American pride was the revelation that the Vostok spacecraft which carried Gagarin had weighed nearly five tons, compared with the one-ton of Shepard's Freedom 7 capsule. The military implications of this Soviet launch capacity brought some sleepless nights at the Pentagon.

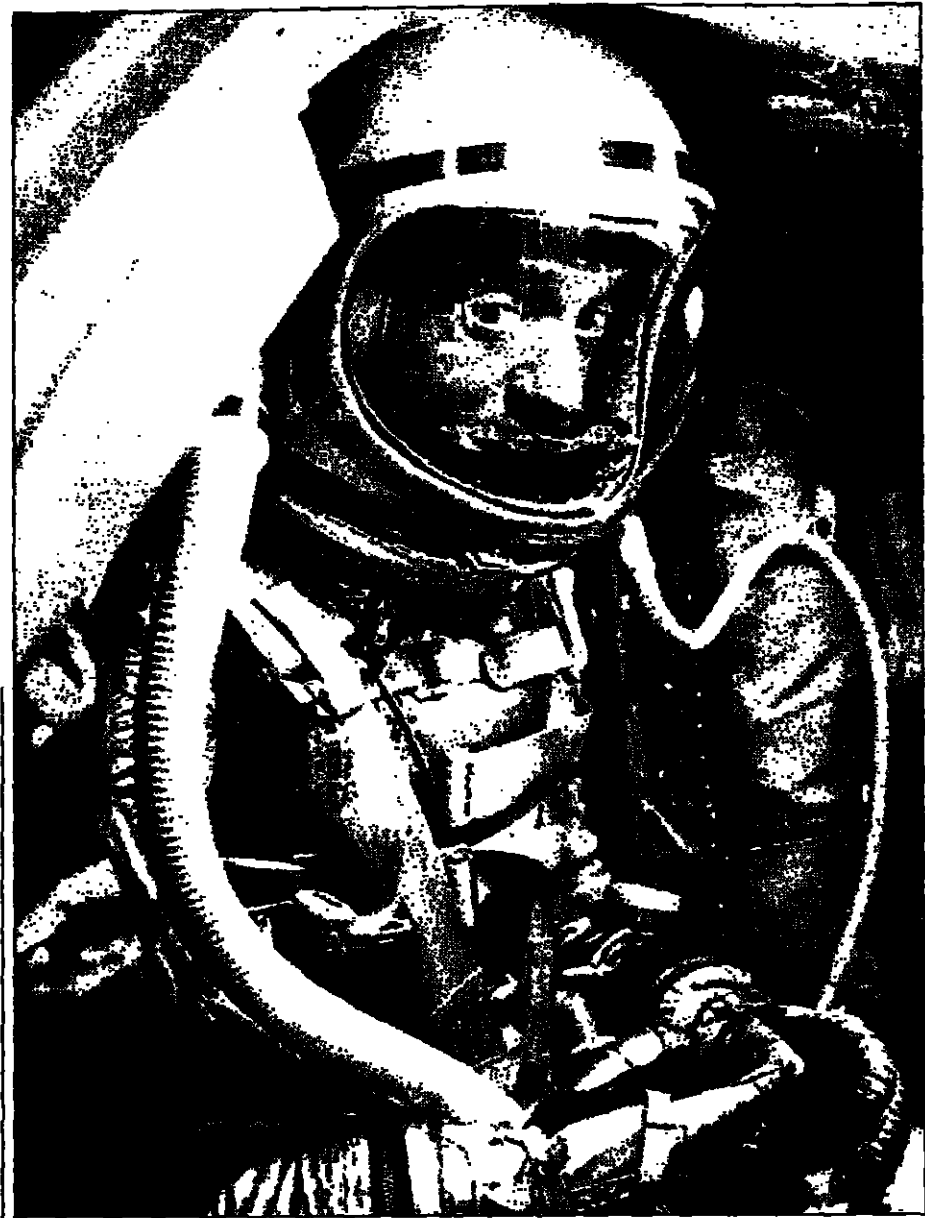
Though the Mercury space project was treated by the America media and public as a sort of latter day wild west show in which the good guys were bound to win in the last reel, its military purpose was at times seriously jeopardised by the insistence on manned space flights. The political reality was, however, that Congress was unlikely to vote the vast sums required without the razzmatazz the team of astronauts could provide.

Shepard was a banker's son, born in East Derry, New Hampshire. He graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1944, becoming an officer on destroyers. He earned his naval "wings" in 1947, and 12

years later found himself one of the seven men chosen to walk the tightrope of simultaneously training vigorously for the technical challenge, and of fulfilling the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's public relations requirements.

This dual role was intensely disliked by most of them and imposed considerable strains. Shepard coped with that by withdrawing into an icy correctness, contrasting sharply with his normal sociability. There was a persistent sense of rivalry between him and John Glenn. Eventually Shepard was picked as prime pilot for the first manned flight, which was only ready after countless earlier delays and technical failures. On the day of America's first manned space shot he had to lie in his windowless capsule for well over four hours while the technicians sorted out one problem after another. As he waited he could feel his bladder growing steadily fuller.

No provision had been made for the inevitable consequence. When he finally conveyed his plight to ground control he was instructed to "do it in the suit". He took off praying fervently that he had done nothing disastrous to the mass of



The anxious hours... Shepard waits for the historic launch at Cape Canaveral in 1961

wiring running through the suit and the capsule. The flight lasted just 15 minutes, of which five were in space.

The combined effect of the enormous forces exerted on his body during the launch and descent — his weight increased twelvefold during re-entry — and his continuing punishing training schedule caused a serious disorder

For over four hours he lay in the capsule while technicians sorted out one problem after another. As he waited he could feel his bladder growing steadily fuller

of his inner ear in 1963. This forced him to move into an administrative role in the Mercury programme. As a Christian Scientist he resisted conventional medical treatment for another five years but eventually acknowledged that surgery was probably his only option. That did cure his partial deafness and dizziness but left him with persistent tinnitus.

In spite of this he was selected as commander of the 1971 Apollo 14 flight to the Moon at the age of 47, a choice which provoked considerable public debate. It was a particularly sensitive mission since it followed the near disaster of Apollo 13, when an oxygen tank in the command module had ruptured, and the crew had to use the life-support system of the lunar module to get back to earth.

Clearly Shepard's 14th flight needed the dedication and reliability which Shepard had shown during his second intensive bout of training. The scientific purpose of the land-

ing was to explore upland regions of the moon near the Fra Mauro crater and, as crewman Stuart Roosa admitted above them, Shepard and Edgar Mitchell became the fifth and sixth humans to tread the moon's surface.

Shepard was promoted to rear admiral in the wake of this flight, the first of the Apollo series to achieve such high military rank, but he decided to leave the project three years later. He then went into private business and, predictably, made a considerable fortune. After his initial flight he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and NASA's Distinguished Service Medal. On leaving the Navy he was also given the Congressional Medal of Honor.

He is survived by his wife Louise, whom he married in 1945, and three daughters.

Harold Jackson

Alan Bartlett Shepard Jr, astronaut, born November 18, 1923, died July 21, 1998

Michael Denison

Perfect antidote to kitchen sink drama

WITH his wife Dulcie Gray, Michael Denison, who has died aged 82, was part of the British theatre's royal family for more than two generations — minor royalty, but royalty nevertheless. Tall, handsome in a patrician way and humorous without the faintest risk of bad taste, his acting persona was much in demand on the British screen in the decade after the second world war. As for the stage, he was still performing earlier this year.

The persona was highly reassuring to an essentially middle class clientele. But being a gentleman, he asserted was nothing to do with birth, it was an attitude. It was an attitude that came back into fashion during his lifetime as a contrast perhaps to the fluctuating fortunes of the "kitchen sink" school. He was equally at home in Shaw or the filmiest West End comedy, and maintained that one of the few regrets of his life was that his war service, in the Royal Signals and Intelligence Corps, had deprived him of the chance of a sound grounding in Shakespeare when he was young enough to benefit from it. Not being able to act during the war was terrible, he observed. The other regret was that he had never become a Hollywood star — a probably more realisable ambition, despite his essential Englishness.

To some extent, but far from totally, the man resembled his "safe" stage and film persona. His father was a prosperous Doncaster paint manufacturer, but his mother died when he was only three weeks old and he was sent to live in the north of England with an uncle and aunt, who were childless. Thus was created both a cultivated social background and the actor's temperamental need to command attention. He was sent off to Harrow School, where he studied for the future playwright Terence Rattigan and took his first steps as an actor. He read modern languages at Magdalen College, Oxford, and while still an undergraduate had a small part in a John Gielgud-directed Richard II which featured Virginia Leigh as the Queen. His uncle, an accountant and frustrated romantic, secretly sympathised with his wish to be an actor and supported his entry in 1937 to the Webber-Douglas School in London —

where he met Dulcie Gray, whom he married in 1939. Denison first appeared on stage in 1938 at the suitably genteel location of Frinton-on-Sea as Lord Fancourt Babberley in the farce *Charley's Aunt*. He made his London debut in the same year as *Paris in Troilus and Cressida* and went on quickly to play successive roles in Shaw, since GBS had a high opinion of the young actor's ability to enunciate what he saw as the musicality of his lines. This love affair with Shaw's plays was to continue into the 1980s. Soon after their marriage the couple joined an Abingdon repertory company, but then came the war.

His first film appearance was in *Tilly of Bloomsbury* in 1940, but it was British cinema that made the popular reputation of both he and Dulcie Gray. They appeared together in a number of stylish and often sentimental films, including in 1947 *My Brother Jonathan*, and *The Glass Mountain*, in which Denison's British composer finds the Italian Alps and some emotional upheavals help remove a creative block. He appeared the 1951 film of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Active in the actors' union Equity, he served on its council. Between 1975 and 1978 he served on the Arts Council drama panel.

His last screen appearance was in *Shadowlands* (1994). Denison's theatre career took him around the world. He and Dulcie Gray were still touring together in the mid-1980s and they last performed their own *Double Act* together in April. In 1987 he was in *The Admirable Crichton* in Chichester. With Dulcie Gray he wrote *The Actor and His World* (1994), and two volumes of memoirs, *Openure and Be- ginner* (1973) and *Double Act* (1985). His wife survives him. They had no children.

Dennis Barker

John Michael Terence Wellesley Denison, actor, born November 1, 1915; died July 21, 1998



Denison with Dulcie Gray in *The Franchise Affair* (1952)

Birthdays

Alan Barnes, saxophonist, 38; Dallas Bower, television producer and director, 91; Prof Ross Cranston, Labour MP, 50; Gloria DeHaven, actress, 74; David Essex, entertainer, 51; Michael Foot, former Labour leader, 85; Graham Gooch, cricketer, 45; the Rev Betsy Haworth, former commissioner, Third Church Estates, 74; Sir Harry

Hookway, former pro-chancellor, Loughborough University, 77; Viktor Korchin, chess grandmaster, 67; Brian McDermott, actor, 64; Clive Rice, cricketer, 49; Lord (Richard) Rogers, architect, 85; Sir John Stokes, former Conservative MP, 81; Andy Townsend, footballer, 35; Peter Twiss, former test pilot, 77.

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Mahbub ul Haq

A new view of the third world

MAHBUB ul Haq, who has died of pneumonia in New York aged 64, will be remembered as the originator of the idea of human development, and the architect of the United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report*, which he helped launch in 1990.

The *Report* changed the way in which policy makers in the north and south think about development, away from excessive emphasis on per capita gross national product growth and towards health, literacy and gender equity. Mahbub ul Haq constantly challenged the Washington consensus on development policy but he did it in a way that was as critical of developing countries who mismanaged their resources as of developed countries which were mean in their transfers.

He was educated at Punjab University in Pakistan, then read economics at King's College Cambridge and won the Adam Smith Prize. After that came Harvard and Yale for his higher degrees. On returning to Pakistan, he became chief economist to the Planning Commission and wrote *The Strategy of Economic Planning* (1963) which remains a model of the development thinking of those days. He then spent a long time at the World Bank and was influential in convincing its president, Robert McNamara, that the main business of the bank was poverty alleviation. Together they formed a formidable team, with Mahbub's skill for formulating



Ul Haq... co-operation

assistant to the administrator of the UNDP.

Here again the alchemy of combining Mahbub with a decisive chief executive worked. William Draper III was appointed by President George Bush but he was persuaded to set aside his preconceptions and back Mahbub in his great

adventure of the *Human Development Report*. To preserve the integrity of the *Report*, Mahbub persuaded Draper to issue it not as a UN document — a kiss of death for independence — but as a free standing publication of the UNDP.

He was able to bring together many of his friends who were distinguished economists in their own right: Amartya Sen, Paul Streeten, Gustav Ranis, Keith Griffin, Frances Stewart. With them as consultants and with a small but dedicated team he built up at the human development report office, he changed the agenda of development worldwide.

The human development index (HDI) which ranked countries by their achievements in life expectancy, education and a measure of per capita income suitably discounted, became an instant success. It was rare for a UN report to be noticed at all, but unique for it to be covered by virtually every newspaper round the world. After that heady launch in 1990, Mahbub saw to it that the radicalism of the *Report* and its power of communication never faltered.

He left the UNDP to return to Pakistan in 1996, where he established the Human Development Centre — the first such centre anywhere. Here again he launched the *South Asia Human Development Report* pointing out the failure of that very populous region, to tackle the tough problems of poverty, illiteracy, discrimination against women.

As always, he was able to show that this was not due to lack of resources — which were wasted on armaments — but to a lack of political will. He was about to launch a report on *South Asian co-operation for the millennium*. He stayed active in the cause of development and poverty alleviation, helped immeasurably in this task by his wife Khadeja, who was an equal partner and who, along with a son and daughter, survived him.

Lord (Mahbub) Dossal

Mahbub ul-Haq, economist, born February 22, 1934; died July 16, 1998

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

ON OUR front page yesterday, with the lead, The bedroom bonanza, we had a panel headed "Worst places to work, which wrongly included Norwich Union. Indicating what we called Worst average salary, we said that at Norwich Union this was \$9,127. We should have said \$19,127 and Norwich Union therefore should not have been in this table at all. Our apologies.

CLERICAL TITLES continued. It was not correct, in a news in brief item, headed

Beckham peace plan, Page 13, July 18, to begin "A Reverend", (this is like saying "A Mr" or "A Mrs"). It was also wrong to identify the Baptist minister concerned as "Rev" without the definite article. The item could have started, A Baptist minister... He should then have been identified as the Rev Andy Bruce.

CRACKER, the dead dog of Brookside, was female not male (yesterday's Corrections, Page 18). The Readers' Editor's mistake.

THE NOVEL by E Annie Proulx which the author of a column on Page 18, July 17, meant to refer to is not called *The Accordion Player*. It is called *Accordion Crimes*.

IN OUR feature, A brush with genius, Page 11, July 21, we reproduced a version of the Courbet painting, *Young Ladies on the Bank of the Seine*, to be found in the Petit Palais, Paris, and not the preliminary version in the National Gallery, London, which was discussed in the

text. In addition, the image was flipped. STEVEN WEBB, whose birthday we recorded on Page 19, July 18, is a Liberal Democrat MP, not Labour. Apologies.

IN AN article on new patterns in policing, headed Off-beat solution, Page 18, July 17, an undetected typographical error led to the following final paragraph. "This is a middle course between a despatching an indelible monopoly over patrol, and the creeping unregulated priva-

tisation of security in public places. This is the third way for the police service." Apologies.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Please quote date and page number. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor by telephoning 0171 299 5555 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Surface mail to Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 119, Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171 299 5897. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

Letter

Joan Karmali writes: Your otherwise excellent obituary of Michael Vasey (July 17) contained one considerable error. Michael's father Sir Ernest Vasey, (known since his teens as Vasey) did not serve in Kenya's first independent government under Jomo Kenyatta.

In the years leading up to the country's independence he served in the colonial government, first as Minister for Education, then Minister of Finance. The then Governor, Sir Philip Mitchell, recognising Vasey's skills and that he was the only white politician of the day with a liberal, non-racist view of Kenya's future,

invited him to become an official member of Legislative Council. Thanks to Vasey's financial acumen and his ability to impress the City of London, Kenya avoided the bankruptcy which would otherwise have resulted from the Mau Mau Emergency.

Through a bizarre series of events Vasey eventually lost his seat in LegCo. At the invitation of Julius Nyerere he became independent Tanzania's first Minister of Finance, where he may well have been the only white in a black government. He retired from that post to become the World Bank's representative in Pakistan.

THE BURRAN, Ireland: To return from Wexford County to the Burran is to be again struck with wonder, a different wonder comprising a journey from lush fertility, metres-deep topsoil to a land of stone. To put a spade to make a flower-bed in the Burran is to discover two centuries of wonder comprising a field underlaid by rock. How we have arrived the ant in our difficult excavations, the creature can, I'm told, lift 50 times its own weight. Now I stand marvelling at 30 wild orchids — twynblades, common spotted, heath spotted, pyramidal, O'Kelly's. There was intense excitement here in May when purple gentians were found. I searched but found none except the Alpine spring blue. I suspect May's purple gentians were just very dark blue. I have often found changes in colour here in the Burran, especially with wild violets and hawthorn

berries. However the wonders are here awaiting discovery. On a recent walk I saw, growing in a mossy hollow of a stone wall, seven different kinds of fern — perfect, no gardener could have been more creative. At 4.30 in the morning the sun had almost fully risen from behind Finsvatra peninsula. On an unrippled sea circles, ellipses of golden light formed — but not straight lines and not a straight line to be seen. I mused, recalling the flowing lines of Celtic monastic art — returned to the oval heads and elliptical petals of the 30 orchids, of the moss-bedded ferns. Perhaps we should erect a curvaceous monument to the inventor of the straight line, who made possible the square, the rectangle. So at evening's end "... the night! In ever hearing circle weaves her shade. I see her veil draw soft across the day" (Matthew Arnold).

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Analysis Rugby in the red

Clubs in a cash ruck

Professionalism brought rich owners into the sport, yet some of the top clubs in England and Wales are going bankrupt. The clubs that pay the players call the tune and the national sides suffer drastic defeats. Ian Malin asks what's gone wrong with our once great game

COULD anywhere have been more appropriate for the clash between the new and the old worlds of rugby union than Rugby, the Midlands town where in 1833 "with a fine disregard for the rules" 16-year-old William Webb Ellis first picked up a football and ran with it. But five summers ago Webb Ellis Road almost became a graveyard for Rugby RFC. The 150-year-old club had debts of around £400,000, most the result of building a new clubhouse at a cost of £500,000. Liquidators were called in and Dudley Wood, secretary of the English Rugby Football Union (RFU), pronounced the financial mess the worst he had seen. Twickenham (the RFU's headquarters) put its hand in its pocket to bail out the game's prodigal son. Rugby was lent £50,000 and the RFU arranged to lease the white elephant of a clubhouse to a newly-formed club, since called Rugby Lions. Only five years ago, but these were still the old amateur days and Twickenham looked after its own. The RFU was not going to allow the town of Rugby to disappear from the map. But three years ago rugby union became "open". Professionalism may have been inevitable, but not the way it has been handled. The travails of the club in Rugby pale as the sport rings with crashing sounds. Twickenham is no longer able to heave a sigh and shell out to help its ailing kin through another season. Something has gone badly wrong: professionalism has been mismanaged. English clubs, those in Wales, too, are paying large salaries to their players but not attracting enough supporters through the turnstiles and into the clubhouses. The result is financial crisis. Yet the clubs going crash are not the Old Ruggerdians or the Biggleswade Vikings. Ninety-five per cent of rugby union clubs in England and Wales remain effectively amateur. They make the along, content if they have enough cash to buy a new set of shirts every season and enough beer to inspire a few choruses

of Eshmo Nell on a Saturday night. The problem is largely confined to the leading clubs. But it is those which during the century past have provided the host of players good enough to wear an England shirt. In this way it has become a national crisis. Take Moseley in Birmingham. The club went into administration earlier this year with debts of over £1 million. A tradition dies at century's end: Moseley's Reddings ground is to be sold to Bryant Homes. A few miles away another second division club with a glorious past, Coventry, is also in desperate trouble. This club happens to have a benefactor in the businessman Gerry Sugrue but so far its attempts to buy success have been a disaster. Its debts also approach £1 million; and Coventry has been riven with dissent. The club's ageing membership objects to Mr Sugrue's plans to leave its rundown but much-loved home at Courdon Road. Where Coventry will go, though, is a bit of a mystery. Next season Moseley and Coventry will be joined in the second division, now portentously called Allied Dunbar Premiership Two, by Bristol RFC, another great club of the past. This week Arthur Holmes, the millionaire insurance broker whose loan has helped Bristol stagger through two years of professionalism, said the club would go out of business unless its players accepted pay-cuts of 30 per cent. "Someone has to come along and share the load otherwise the club will close down," he warned. "Unfortunately Bristol is a salesman's graveyard but I can see a dozen or so clubs going out of business because the wages are ridiculous."

On the other side of Offa's Dyke things are worse. In 15 months' time Wales will host rugby's world cup. In preparation, the Millennium Stadium is arising from the building site that was the Cardiff Arms Park. The Welsh Rugby Union is generating good money through sponsorship for European Cup competition from Heineken, through a television contract for S4C channel and through internationals.

It is again the clubs which are in a parlous state. Neath, founded in 1871, is the oldest first-class club in Wales. Or was. The club has gone bankrupt and folded, its players unpaid since the end of last season. Neath was once disparaged by the visiting Australia coach, Bob Dwyer as "the bag-snatching capital of the world" — he was referring to the men in black grabbing the testicles of his players in scrums. Now it is Neath's bank manager who is putting on the squeeze. It owes £20,000 after a season in which it finished fifth in Wales's Premier Division; it has no assets and its ground, the Gnoll, is owned by the local authority. However next month, like Rugby Lions, it is supposed to emerge as a new club, tentatively named Neathse. THE clubs flounder. No huge chip companies, let alone breweries, seem willing to pay to support Wales's national game at club level and the Welsh Rugby Union has had to hire the sports management company IMG to look for a sponsor for the Premier Division. Yet the same WRU is prepared to part with £1.25 million for the services of a coach, New Zealander Graham Henry, to try to improve Wales's wretched results in the last decade. In England professionalism has been a very painful transition indeed. In the southern hemisphere professional status for players was embraced with enthusiasm: in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand they were put under contracts by their national unions. For rugby's superpowers, pulling on the national jersey means everything. In England, by contrast, rugby union has for years been a recreational game of the middle-classes, learned on the playing fields of public and grammar schools and played in clubs. The transition has been tortuous. Cliff Brittle would have approved of Twickenham's gesture to Rugby's rugby club five years ago. Brittle was, until this week, chairman of



Peace treaty

With the announcement of the Mayfair Agreement on May 8 this year, the RFU and Premiership clubs have tried to resolve the contractual wranglings over players being released for internationals. Both sides hope the agreement will stay in place for seven years. The main points are:

- Five Nations (or Six, as Italy are included from 2000) will be played towards the end of the season
- Lions tour to New Zealand moved from 2000 to 2001
- A limit of 37 club and international matches during a season for England players
- No postponement of club fixtures on international weekends
- Clubs agree to release players for international duty for eight periods a season
- English clubs will not participate in next season's Pan-European competition organised by European Rugby Cup Limited

the RFU's management board, the most powerful administrator of the game in England. Like the chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board Lord MacLaurin, who believes there is a link between players from "village green and Test arena" Brittle believes in rugby from the grassroots upwards, a broad church in which everyone is singing from the same hymn-sheet. When rugby went professional three years ago, Twickenham imposed a moratorium on paying players for a season while the implications of the end of amateurism were worked out. The owners of the clubs, many new to the game, were not prepared to hang about for Twickenham to report. Here was the bullish Sir John Hall, the North Eastern tycoon and chairman of Newcastle United FC. He took over the ailing Newcastle Falcons club, changing its name to Newcastle Falcons. Following him the new owners began intensive recruitment drives. These owners were a new breed, Nigel Wray at Saracens, Richmond's Ashley Levett, Bath's Andrew Brownson and the Arrows' grand prize racing boss Tom Walkinshaw at Gloucester. For their clubs they signed up some of the world's top players. South Africa's World Cup captain Francois Pienaar, the Australian fly-half Michael Lynagh and France's captain Philippe Saint-André, all adding a dash of the exotic to the once cosy world of the English domestic game. The club owners wanted to drive the game forwards by organising their own competitions and television deals.

BUT then came Cliff Brittle, a millionaire tax exile in the Isle of Man, who emerged in the autumn of 1995, a rugby backwoodsman with a mission to fight off the new entrepreneurs and protect the beloved game. Brittle's two-and-a-half year reign at the RFU was rancorous. Last summer he held off a challenge to his chairmanship by Sussex solicitor Bob Rogers; last Sunday Brian Balster, a 56-year-old former deputy constable of Cheshire, defeated Brittle at the RFU annual general meeting by 520 votes to 345. The two years' meetings could not have been more different. In London in 1997 the Elton Hotel had a surreal air. One of the delegates complained about the price of a pint of beer in the hotel bar while Will Carting arrived on the back of a motor-bike to speak up passionately against Brittle. More tellingly, last year the British Isles (the Lions) had just arrived home from a triumphant tour of South Africa where, against all predictions, they had defeated the world champions 2-1 in a Test series. This

summer the national sides of England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland have just returned from tours of the southern hemisphere and in all nine Tests

weakened sides had all been beaten, mostly by huge margins. England lost 75-0 defeat to Australia. Wales were one try away from conceding a century to the Springboks. The British and Irish teams were all missing star players because in the northern hemisphere the players are contracted to the clubs and the past season has been bruising: representation of country takes second place. An attempt was made in the spring to bridge the gap between club and country. This so-called Mayfair Agreement, between Twickenham and the clubs, is partly designed to end the conflict. Players, it decrees, should not play more than 37 club games a season.

ANOTHER major player has joined the field, Rupert Murdoch. Last summer's tour by the Lions was shown exclusively on Sky TV, the result of a deal done on the eve of the 1995 World Cup final in South Africa which gave Murdoch exclusive rights to all international rugby in the southern hemisphere. The following year a deal between the English RFU and Sky led to a conflict between England and the national bodies for Scotland, Ireland and Wales, which almost killed off the game's oldest tournament, the Five Nations Championship, the shop window of rugby in Europe for a century.

Brittle had opposed the deal in which Sky had offered Twickenham £87.5 million for the right to show England's home games. The other national bodies were incensed, claiming the television rights to their games were not Twickenham's to sell. The cost of a peace deal with them and England's readmission to the Five Nations eventually cost Twickenham £50 million over five years. British rugby survived but the RFU's finances, still recovering from the cost of rebuilding the stadium at Twickenham remain shaky. The RFU's new chairman, Brian Balster, has been making promises... an end to the rancour, no more disastrous tours to the southern hemisphere, a structure for the season that will allow both clubs and national teams to prosper. Today the Twickenham management board meets for the first time under his leadership. But it would be optimistic to think he could stop the constant struggle between wealthy men in suits. Already this week Sir John Hall and Nigel Wray have threatened to sell up if there is no progress made in establishing a new European competition for next season. The club owners are suspicious of what is on offer, the officially sanctioned pan-European competition controlled by European Rugby Cup Limited. Meanwhile, South Africa and New Zealand are preparing for their fixture in Wellington this weekend. The two countries competed in the last World Cup final. The action in Wellington, a game to be shown exclusively on Sky, will be light years away from anything seen on these shores. Rugby owners and administrators will continue to lock horns in offices while the real spoils of a great game will be fought for on the other side of the globe, on the pitch.

Graphics sources: Rugby World Aug 1998; Division One clubs: RFU; Graphics: Michael Agar; Graphic News; Research: Matthew Kesting; Ian Malin is a Guardian rugby writer.

Season Match day

1996-97	1997-98	Ticket prices
5,762	7,282	£30-310
3,667	3,605	£45-140
4,697	7,586	£25-12
4,076	5,903	£25-235
10,412	12,859	£36-204
2,854	3,718	£11-17
2,528	5,023	£45-220
6,083	6,515	£5-20
2,495	3,611	£50-160
2,848	3,618	£5-15
3,370	9,303	£55-150
5,947	5,834	£7-17.50
		£90-280
		£25-20
		£119-179
		£25-14
		£55-255
		£25-17
		£15-258
		£25-20
		£10-175
		£11-16
Total Attendance		
1996-97	560,814	
1997-98	823,446	

Attendance up
22%

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Football

Storm over Far Eastern World Cup

Mark Tallentire

THE next World Cup may have to be rescheduled to avoid the rainy seasons in Japan and South Korea, a move which would throw the domestic leagues of most of the participants into chaos.

World Cup finals are traditionally held in June and July — the close season in most European and South American countries — but Japan and South Korea, the co-hosts in 2002, get the bulk of their 40 or so inches of annual rainfall in the summer and consider an autumn start preferable.

"The rescheduling is an urgent matter that should be decided on by the end of this year at the latest," said Chung Moon-joon, the head of South Korea's Football Association. He also pointed out that the 1998 Seoul Olympics were staged in September that year and the 1994 Tokyo Games took place in the October.

He added that when the issue was unofficially raised at a Fifa executive meeting in Paris last month, most members seemed to support the suggestion. A spokesman for Fifa said the governing body had yet to be officially informed of the proposal.

The French cabinet yesterday voted to make the country's 32-man World Cup squad and their coach Aimé Jacquet knights of the Legion of Honour. The president, Jacques Chirac, announced the

awards at the annual Elysée Palace garden party, where the squad were special guests.

Brazil have asked for next month's scheduled friendly with South Korea to be postponed until mid-October, citing a need to resolve "internal problems".

Dino Zoff, Italy's World Cup winning captain in 1982, will officially take over as national coach on Tuesday. His first game will be the European Championship qualifier with Wales on September 5.

A mystery consortium will take over at Oxford United subject to a satisfactory agreement being reached with the City Council and Taylor Woodrow, the company who were building the club's new stadium when work stopped in January 1997.

The Premier League has dismissed a claim by Aston Villa's chairman Doug Ellis that Premiership games may be on pay-per-view television by the new year. "There are no plans at this point for any pay-per-view experiment in the near future," a spokesman said, adding that the Premiership clubs turned down Sky's pay-per-view proposals only two months ago.

Ian Snodin has been named as Doncaster's manager, completing the circle for the 34-year-old who started his career at Belle Vue in 1980.

Eric Cantona will play at a beach tournament featuring teams from France, Spain, Italy and Yugoslavia in Alicante this weekend.

Gattuso to keep Juventus on ice

RINO GATTUSO yesterday admitted he had turned down a close-season approach from Juventus and said that, as long as he continues to be selected for Rangers' first team, he will be happy to remain at Ibrox.

"I am only 20 and playing for a great team so there is no need for me to move on just now," said the Italy Under-21 midfielder. "Juventus are the biggest club in Europe but I have another three years left on my contract and Rangers are easily big enough for me."

The Sunderland defender Richard Ord is about to complete a £1 million move to Queens Park Rangers and end a 12-year stay at the club. He will back on the opening day of the season, however, when his new club visit the Stadium of Light. A back injury cost the 28-year-old his place last season and he could not get it back from Darren Williams or Jody Craddock after he regained fitness.

Gianfranco Zola has taken a swipe at Chelsea's policy of rotating their strikers and prompted suggestions that he could be on the move to Cagliari, his home-town club who have just been promoted to Serie A.

Although Mark Hughes has joined Southampton, Zola will

still have to compete for a place with Gialluca Vialli and Tore Andre Flo as well as Pierluigi Casiraghi, who joined from Lazio for £5.4 million, and Brian Landrup, a free transfer from Rangers.

While Elliott, who suffered a double leg-fracture in Bolton's first-ever game at the Reebok last August, played 20 minutes of a friendly at Waterford on Tuesday, the £2.5 million buy from Newcastle has played less than four games for Wanderers.

The Swedish international Jesper Blomqvist yesterday completed a £4.4 million move from Parma to Manchester United, where he signed a three-year deal.

Coventry are expecting to strengthen their squad with the £4 million they received for Romania's striker Viorel Moldovan. "We are on the tail of a major signing which we hope to have tied up by Thursday or Friday of this week," said the chairman Bryan Richardson. "We are only interested in top, top international players of World Cup class."

Ipswich's manager George Burley yesterday conceded that he may be forced to sell the Argentinian wing-back Mauricio Taricco to Tottenham if they bid £2 million.

Europe starts here: first qualifying round, first legs

Uefa Cup
Shelbourne 3
Rangers 5

Rangers back from brink

Derek Potter
at Prenton Park

SHELBOURNE, who could live for three years on the money lavished by Rangers in the transfer market, were given a three-goal start by Dick Advocaat's expensive Rangers last night.

Then, after Pat Morley had given them a 2-0 lead on a wet night, goals from Gabriel Amato (2), Giovanni Van Bronckhorst and two Jorg Albertz penalties smacked the brave Irish.

Ten days after the World Cup Final, not a ball bowled in the fourth Test. Even though the close season is ever-shrinking, it did not take long for passions to overheat with the Shelbourne players' coach hit by missiles as it arrived. Police were called to incidents in the Clipper pub alongside the ground.

If the beginning of the pitch was predictable, the start to the match was unexpected with a goal in the sixth minute to the humble 'Shells' tackling a team bulging with big and expensive signings.

Dessie Baker's cross seemed to be a routine clearance for Sergio Porrino. The Serie A will not have seen a more classic own-goal as the Italian defender misjudged his back header and beat his goalkeeper Antti Niemi with ease.

If the perfect start for Dermot Kelly in his first major match in charge and a downer for Advocaat whose Rangers have lavished more than £20 million on summer signings.

Rangers looked the part, however, passing menacingly on the lush re-laid green of a third-fil Prenton Park. But Shelbourne's goalkeeper Alan Gough snuffed the first real



Head first... David Graham of Rangers eludes a high tackle from Shelbourne's Pat Fenlon

PHOTOGRAPH: STU FORSTER

hope of an equaliser with a thrilling save from Gordon Durie, one of only three Scots names in the team at the start.

If there was a hint of shambles at the first goal,

there was even more disarray three minutes from half-time. A corner kick by Pat Fenlon hung invitingly for a defender — or attacker. Mark Rutherford finally swept the second

goal after a header by Fenlon.

Shelbourne (4-4-2): Gough; Boyd, Pieter (Anson), Smith, Stubbs, Maher; McManus (Connolly), 67, Surley, Lambert, Blinzer; Larsson, Bradburn (Lambert), 46.

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Tour de France

Pantani flies into Ullrich's mirror

The Italian climbs into contention, reports William Fotheringham

AFTER the thick mist of Tuesday the air was crystal-clear in the Pyrenees yesterday, with each green peak etched in perfect detail against the cloudless sky. And the day after the first stage there the Tour de France took on a clearer form as well.

It seems only two men are now in a position to obstruct Jan Ullrich's serene progress towards a second Tour victory. One is Marco Pantani, whose consummate ability to conquer mountains and hearts was shown again yesterday when he took his fifth Tour stage win and closed to just over three minutes behind Ullrich.

The other is a surprise, the American Bobby Julich, who showed no signs of weakness as Ullrich attempted to respond to Pantani's attack on the final climb to the finish here at Plateau de Beille, 5,000 feet above sea level, in the heart of one of France's biggest cross-country ski resorts. In his second Tour the 26-year-old from Colorado lies second, just over a minute behind Ullrich.

Pantani's win came in his usual irrepressible style atop a climb which came close to matching the Tour's toughest summit finish, l'Alpe d'Huez, for length — just under 10 miles — and steepness. He launched himself clear of the lead group soon after the start of the climb and was quickly lost amid the throng of fans.

Only one man lay between the Italian and the stage victory but he had been talking about since Dublin. The Swiss Roland Meier had led over three of the four climbs and had survived a spectacular crash at full tilt on the descent from the Col de la Core.

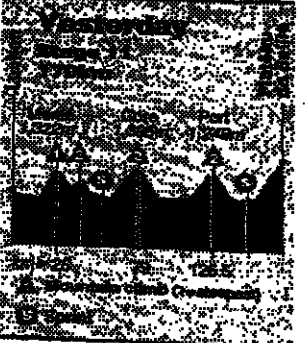
Meier and his bike hit a crash barrier, which stopped the bike while the Swiss went on into the air and down the hillside. Only a convenient thickset saved him from serious injury. He pedalled on with undiminished vigour but inevitably Pantani flew past him when he was five miles from what would have been the biggest victory of his career.

The Tour of Italy winner has regained two of the five minutes which separated him from Ullrich after last Saturday's time trial but he will not have cut off a challenge for the yellow jersey. "Thinking about overall victory makes my head hurt," he said.

Ullrich had a straightforward stage until he punctured at the foot of the climb to the finish. Professional cycling ethics dictate that no one attacks the yellow jersey in such a situation but, once on a new bike, Ullrich spent valuable energy fighting his way through the backmarkers as they slipped back on the lower slopes and, after he had rejoined the leaders, Pantani wasted no more time before buzzing off to the plateau of the bees.

Abraham Olsano abandoned due to the serious cuts he received in his crash on Tuesday. Spanish hopes now lie with the hook-nosed Fernando Escartón, one of the five who managed to hang on to Ullrich as he chased Pantani.

William Fotheringham is assistant editor of Cycling Weekly.



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European Cup: Celtic 0 St Patrick's Ath 0

Wood starves the masses

Patrick Glenn

CELTIC will remain favourites to meet Croatia Zagreb in the second preliminary round of the UEFA Cup on Tuesday at Parkhead but they will need to show much more inventiveness if they are to satisfy their vast support.

The Irish champions spent much of the time demonstrating how best to keep all but a tiny fraction of almost 60,000 people improbably quiet. Or at least their goalkeeper Trevor Wood did. His performance in a 1-1 draw with Celtic in last summer's pre-season match in Dublin secured him a contract with St Patrick's; he clearly coveted a repeat performance.

During an almost relentlessly one-sided first half Wood was called upon to make a lengthy series of saves, which he accomplished acrobatically and, for the home support, frustratingly.

When Craig Burley's chip from the right side of the area was deflected towards the roof of his net by Paul O'Shea, the goalkeeper looked odds-against but he dived up and backwards to fingertip the ball over. He then parried a fierce shot from Reg Hinton and repeated the trick from Henrik Larsson's close-range header after the Swede had leapt to meet Paul Lambert's chip.

The goalkeeper completed his first-half act by diving to his left to hold a well-controlled, 25-yard low drive

from Lambert, who had the grace to applaud.

There was a change in St Pat's approach after the interval, and it did nothing to enhance Celtic's prospects. As if realising that Wood was unlikely to survive the duration, they abandoned even the occasional foray and massed in front of their goalkeeper.

When Jackie McNamara, out on the right of the area, volleyed the substitute Darren Jackson's header not far wide, it was a laudable attempt but smacked of desperation.

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